HOW TO USE *Intuition* TO ELEVATE YOUR CRAFT

INTUITIVE *Witchcraft*

ASTREA TAYLOR

INTUITIVE *Witchcraft*

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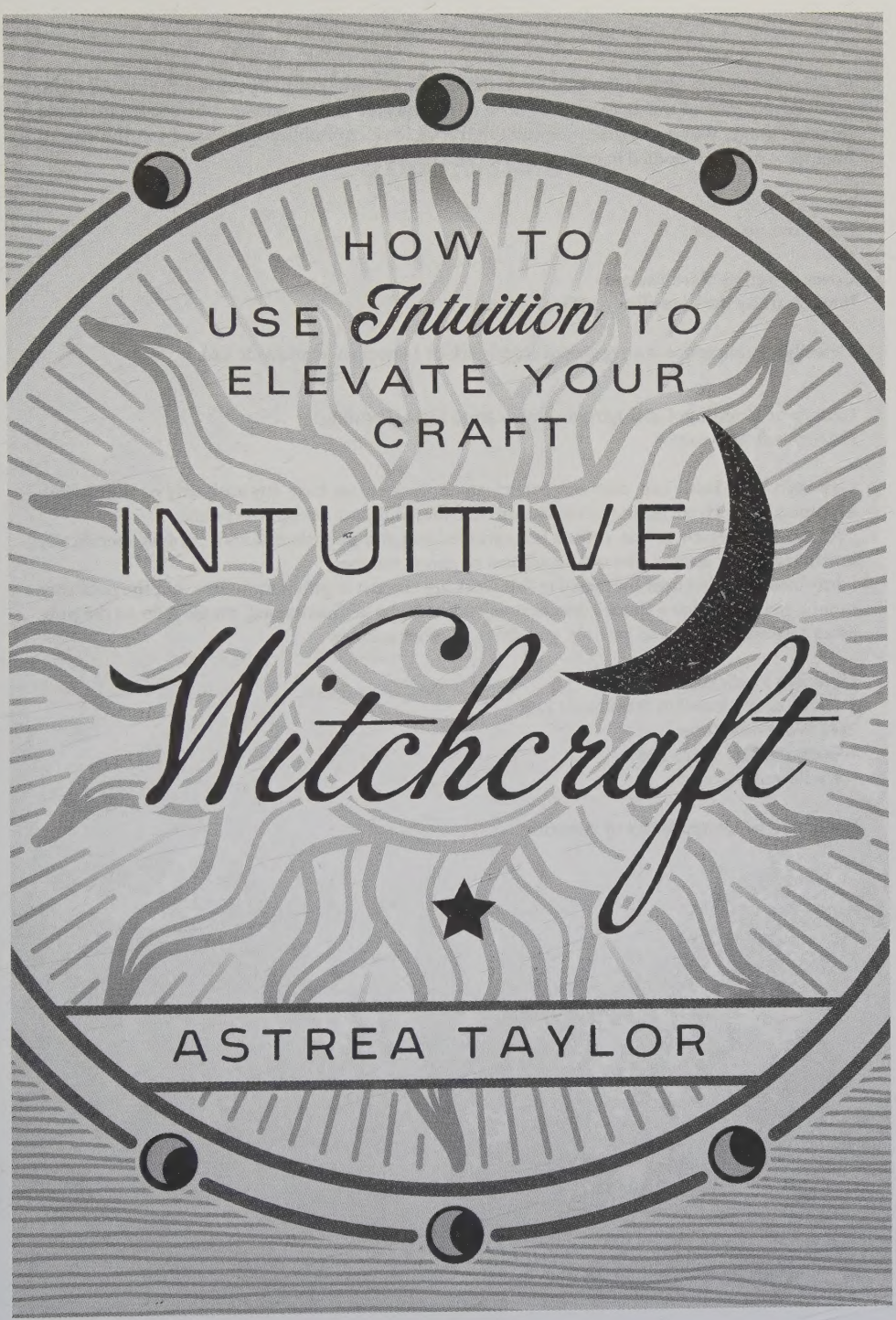
About the Author

Astrea Taylor is a pagan author, blogger, speaker, and tarot reader. She writes as Starlight Witch on the Patheos Pagan blog platform and leads workshops and rituals at various pagan and witch gatherings. Her passage about faery altars was published in *The Witch's Altar* (Mankey and Zakroff, Llewellyn 2018), and she has also written for *Soul and Spirit* magazine and *Lune Bleue* magazine. She's the cocreator of Blessed Be Boxes, which ships rituals and materials for all kinds of occasions. When she's not writing, she coleads the fire dancing group Aurora Fire.



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Also by Astrea Taylor

House of Transformation

Belle Dame Sans Merci

For my intuitive, witchy mother,
who loves unconditionally and always encouraged me to be myself.

It is with great love and humility that I extend this acceptance
to all those who wander the path without a path.

Disclaimer

The exercises and concepts in this book are intended for your spiritual benefit; however, no book about experimenting with using your intuition to make life-changing choices would be complete without a disclaimer. Please research facts and do your due diligence to ensure your personal safety. Be cautious when using oils and herbs—don't ingest essential oils, don't use undiluted oils on your skin, and be cautious in the use of herbs and oils in case an allergic reaction could occur. Should you have any medical or mental health questions or concerns, consult a doctor, therapist, or another health care provider.

Per aspera, ad astra.
Over the rocky cliffs, to the stars.

Contents

List of Exercises and Rituals *xvii*

Part I: The Call to Intuitive Witchcraft

Chapter 1: Listening to Your Intuition ... 7

Chapter 2: Working with Energy ... 29

Chapter 3: Basic Intuitive Witchcraft ... 51

Intuitive Insights:
The Underrated Power of Imagination
BY MAT AURYN 58

Chapter 4: Making Intuitive Magic Come Alive ... 79

Intuitive Insights:
Using Intuition to Create an Aromatherapy Concoction
BY STEFANIE PALMER 97

Chapter 5: Intuitive Practices and Rituals ... 105

Intuitive Insights:
Consult the Stars and Planets
BY HEATHER RENAE HORTON 125

Part II: Beyond the Veil

Chapter 6: Working with the Gods ... 135

Intuitive Insights:
Writing Invocations and Devotional Speech
BY HANNAH SAVAGE 148

Chapter 7: Spirit Craft ... 159

Chapter 8: Making the Mundane Magical ... 177

Intuitive Insights:
Intuition and Magical Activism
BY MICHAEL M. HUGHES 191

Chapter 9: Working with Other People's Energies ... 195

Intuitive Insights:
Intuitive Healing
BY SHRINGARA HASYA 202

Chapter 10: Advanced Magic and Energy Work ... 213

Chapter 11: Looking into the Void ... 235

Intuitive Insights:
Second Sight
BY LISA BLAND 240

Chapter 12: Living in the Spiritual Flow ... 255

Chapter 13: Intuitive Witchcraft Communities ... 273

Intuitive Insights:
Generational Witch Legacies
BY JACKI SMITH 277

Chapter 14: The Ever-Evolving Practice ... 293

Intuitive Insights:
On Becoming a Pagan Elder, Crone, Mage, or Senior
BY PENNY GOODY 302

Conclusion: Reaching for the Stars 305

Bibliography 307

Glossary 313

Essayist Biographies 321

Acknowledgments 325

Index 327

Exercises and Rituals

Chapter 1

Exercise: Release the Bonds of the Past 14

Journaling Exercise: Spiritual Origins 18

Exercise: Listening to the Body 20

Journaling Exercise: Strengths and Weaknesses 23

Journaling Exercise: Acknowledging and Releasing Triggers 27

Ritual: The Promise to Follow Intuition 28

Chapter 2

Exercise: Listening to the Body's Reactions 32

Journaling Exercise: New Emotion, Who's This? 36

Exercise: Strengthening the Guardian 37

Exercise: Meditation 38

Exercise: The Energy Grid 43

Exercise: Chakra Scan 48

Chapter 3

Ritual: Willpower Made Manifest 76

Chapter 4

Exercise: Raising Energy 85

Exercise: Personal Color Correspondences 86

Exercise: Personal Plant Correspondences 87

Ritual: Creating a Home Ward 98

Ritual: Self-Initiation 103

Chapter 5

Exercise: Your Own Intuitive Morning or Night Practice 111

Ritual: Spontaneous Ritual 128

Chapter 6

Ritual: Offering to a Deity 148

Chapter 7
Ritual: An Offering to Nature Spirits or the Fae 167
Ritual: Working with Beneficial Spirits for Protection 175

Chapter 8
Exercise: Cleanse Your Home 179

Chapter 9
Ritual: Cut Negative Cords and Call Back Energy 207

Chapter 10
Meditation: Alpha and Theta Brainwave Trance States 215
Exercise: Drill to Raise Energy 216
Exercise: Closed and Open Energy 217
Exercise: Staying at Medium Energy 219
Exercise: Casting Circles 219

Chapter 11
Exercise: Dream Initiation 240
Exercise: Listening to the Shadow 246
Exercise: Integrate the Shadow 248
Ritual: Three Otherworldly Circles 250

Chapter 12
Exercise: Flow State Experiments 258
Journaling Exercise: Energy Flip 265

Chapter 13
Ritual to Honor Magical Community: The Cauldron of Community 289

Chapter 14
Exercise: Spiritual Goals 302
Exercise: How Much Hermit Time Do You Need? 302

PART I

The Call to Intuitive Witchcraft

From deep within the wild woods comes a call. The voice is mysterious, but somehow familiar. There's something otherworldly about it, something pure and true. It may be faint at first, but with time, it grows louder and becomes harder to ignore. The call rings throughout sun-dappled days, dark nights, and snowy afternoons. It can be heard in moments of stillness and connection and also in times of despair or loneliness. If ignored, the call becomes more insistent. It becomes so loud that it pulls on our hearts and tugs at our ears. The yearning in the voice can slow our pace so much that we might find ourselves frozen on our current path, unable to take another step.

The call emanates from the strange, enchanted forest that lies just off the path. We turn our heads to hear it better. Once we begin to listen, we understand: the call is the sound of our own souls yearning for a deeper life. The call says there's something more out there. It's a cry to break free from the rigors of the mundane world and everything we've been told life is. The call speaks to us about exploring the mysteries and what we could become, if only we'd

listen to the wisdom deep within ourselves. Deep in our bones, we know this is true. We know we need to experience something greater than our present situations. More than anything, we need a magical life that can truly be called our own.

Intuitive witchcraft is a spiritual lifestyle that celebrates the truth of who we are and what we feel. It's all about creating a meaningful spirituality that honors our unique souls. We work with different energies—our own, that of the material world, and that of the immaterial worlds. With that wisdom, we draw from deep within and cast our will and purpose out into the world.

Whether you're curious about intuition or witchcraft, or if you're a beginner starting on their spiritual path, or if you just want to breathe new life into your current practice, this book is for you. Intuitive witchcraft is a variation of eclectic witchcraft, like hedge witchcraft and kitchen witchery. However, intuitive witches are different in that we rely solely on a honed skill set of intuitive practices that are based in energy awareness. These practices help create a foundation for growth that's missing in some eclectic practices. The result is a grounded and wise witchcraft that evolves deeply and beautifully.

Because intuitive witchcraft is a traditionless craft, there are no rules or authority figures. There are, however, a few tenets to live by that illuminate the basics:

The first tenet of intuitive witchcraft is you are intuitive: know your intuition, and to your intuition be true. This is an adaptation of phrases from the Oracle at Delphi ("know thyself)" and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* ("to thine own self be true") combined with intuition. Even though these are old phrases, they're still relevant in our modern day because they're the foundations for anyone seeking to live with integrity. Intuition is the best method to know one's self, but it can get lost in the shuffle or overpowered from time to time. It's important to know how you really feel and honor it. When we live our lives in accordance with this tenet, we have true strength and power. By knowing and honoring our intuition, we create spiritual lives worth living.

The second tenet of intuitive witchcraft is you are energy: seek understanding, balance, and alignment of your own energy. Everything in the universe is made of energy, including ourselves. We can use our intuition to sense the energy

within and around us. Like ultraviolet rays of light, a lot of energy is invisible to our human senses. That doesn't make it nonexistent; it merely makes it more subtle. Being sensitive to this more nebulous energy is one of the intuitive witch's greatest strengths. If you picked up this book, it's likely that you feel energy and are aware of its effects. This is a strength that will be used throughout this craft.

The third tenet of intuitive witchcraft is you are magic: you have the ability to modify your energy and the energies around you through willpower. When you raise energy and combine it with your intuitive desires, you can effect change in the world.

This book guides the seeker on how to create a spiritual practice based on their own intuition, energy, self-exploration, and applied magics. The insights are based on decades of study and experience. They illuminate difficult-to-grasp concepts and promote an understanding of the real self, how energy works, and how to use it for your own benefit *and* for the world around you. The exercises will help you become aware of your energy and the energies outside of you. They reveal how you can create balance, draw energy from the earth and the cosmos, elevate your vibration, and align with your desires.

Part 1 of this book contains the energetic basics for all intuitive witchcraft. It discusses how to become more aware of energy and how to achieve change according to your will. It will help you re-wild your soul, develop your intuition, and evaluate the energetic exchanges in your life. Throughout these lessons, you'll honor your own personal path. Part 1 also instructs you on raising energy, strengthening willpower, and manifesting your desires the intuitive way. This lets you walk the path of power by getting you in touch with what you seek and guiding you through ways to work your magic. If you're an advanced practitioner, you could skip these chapters; however, I've found it's useful to go over the basics with different perspectives to see if there's anything new I can glean from them.

Part 2 of this book is about elevating your knowledge to a more meaningful and personal level. You'll use your intuition about magic and energy to channel higher vibrations and deeper insights. Mysteries are revealed, and living in the flow becomes a greater possibility. We can evolve into positions of

greater personal power and intuitive strength with these advanced techniques and concepts.

The ultimate purpose of *Intuitive Witchcraft* is to encourage you to find your inner voice, to nurture it, and to follow it wherever it may lead. When we're connected to our wild souls, we experience life on a much deeper level. And once we experience the thrill of finding our own path in the enchanted forest, we can't go back to the way things were, with limited awareness and mundane conversations. We need our intuition to survive as much as we need fresh air, clean water, and good food.

Throughout this book, the metaphors of finding one's own path, the wild woods, and the enchanted forest are used to illuminate aspects of the intuitive witch's spiritual journey. They echo the wilderness we seek, the mysteries of life, the decisions we make, and our journeys as intuitive witches. The woods are primal places of magic and mystery—it's no wonder that many fairy tales are set there. It's where journeys begin and magic is found.

Intuitive witchcraft is a self-directed practice, and as such, is very personal. It can look like many different things. Intuitive witches can worship one deity, several deities, or none at all. It can be one thing one day, and something completely different the next. They can cast spells, or they can eschew spells and simply speak from their hearts. They can cast circles and have elaborate rituals, or they can skip rituals altogether in favor of a different kind of practice, such as divination, ecstatic dance, or traveling the otherworlds. Some intuitive witches choose to curse, while others don't. Many are flexible in their approaches to spirituality and are open to experimenting with different things to see what works. Our practices may accompany, or be influenced by, traditional witchcraft, ancient pagan religions, paganism, the New Age movement, Buddhism, and many other spiritualities. These other paths can blend with intuitive witchcraft rather remarkably, each path feeding the other and advancing one's personal practice. It can be a revelatory experience for people who like to study several paths at once. It can also be an attractive path for solitary eclectic practitioners who are looking for a little more internal guidance.

Although the intuitive path could appear to be aimless to some, it's because we're following our hearts in the dark, guided by the small but steady inner voice of our intuition. Since we choose each direction and don't rely on other people to make decisions for us, we have our own wisdom. Many of us are

better off this way because we're doing exactly what feels right for us. We just need to learn to use the tenets for our desires. That's the goal of this book—to teach the ways and means to harness your power as you see fit, in your own ever-evolving, ever-deepening spirituality.

Perhaps you've already heeded the call of the wild soul, and you're already walking the path of the intuitive witch. Or it's possible you feel called to the mysterious path because you know that many things exist beyond the realms of the senses. Or maybe you just don't fit into any spiritual organizations, and you're looking for a way to integrate who you are with the spiritual world.

The information presented in this book is a compilation of what has worked for me and for many other people. Intuitive witches do whatever works—if something works for you, use it. If it doesn't, try something else. This book does not aim to present historical accuracies, teach traditional practices, or reveal occult secrets. Apart from the general witchcraft in this book, much of the material presented herein was intuited, as intuition is my guiding light and has been for my entire life. This book was written with the same concept in mind for the reader; to provide options and encourage you to find your own practices that work with your unique energy.

Through intuitive witchcraft, we can learn the things we want to learn. We can lead meaningful lives and experience profound growth through honing our skills. Deep inside our hearts, we know which paths we need to walk better than anyone else does. I believe we're the witches we've been waiting for. If you picked up this book, you may be part of the next generation of people who effect change in the world by using their energy and willpower. Whether or not you use the word *witch* to describe yourself, you hold the power to change your life. It's all inside you. All you have to do is listen to your inner wisdom and learn how to wield that energy.

And so, we step off the main path and into the enchanted forest, where a sharp crescent moon shines through the branches of the trees. We owe it to ourselves to explore the call that came from deep within the woods. Picking our way through the forest, we follow the call of our soul and choose our paths by intuition. Somehow, we know that this "path without a path" is our truth, our way. We know it'll give us a truly unique and genuine spiritual experience.

Our journeys begin with dancing eyes and hearts ablaze. Welcome to the possibilities of living in your intuitive power.

Chapter 1

Listening to Your Intuition

As you step deeper into the enchanted forest of the soul, you notice there are no paths, just a vast, thick woods spreading as far as the eye can see. Where do you want to go? What direction are you attracted to, and what area repels you? When do you feel safe, and what makes you feel threatened?

The first tenet of intuitive witchcraft is to know your intuition and to your intuition be true. Our journey starts with creating spaces inside ourselves to allow our intuition to speak to us. We can listen to the small voice of our intuition and learn who we are, what we feel, and what we want.

By listening to that little voice, we find ways to be true to it, to speak our truths out loud, and to honor ourselves. When we check in with intuition often about what we really feel, we can find our way through the wild woods easily and live our personal truths. Conversely, if we ignore the little voice, we won't know who we are, what we feel, or what we want. We wouldn't be true to anything, which makes everything around us, including our lives, become meaningless. In other words, when we don't listen to that little voice, we become lost in the woods. Getting to know who we really are and how we feel can be one of life's biggest hurdles but also one of the greatest pleasures.

This chapter evaluates methods to achieve the goals of the first tenet of intuitive witchcraft. We will move through unbrainwashing, removing toxic sources, rewilding, and listening to the body. We'll radically accept ourselves as we are, hold steady to our intuition, and make a promise to honor that wisdom deep within ourselves. Are you ready? Take a deep breath.

What Is Intuition, Exactly?

Intuition is a gentle voice or feeling that urges us in one direction or another. It tells us what we really want and how we feel about things. It's a feeling felt predominantly in the gut, though that's not the only place it can be felt. It can also be sensed in the heart, on the surface of one's skin, and in the energetic field surrounding the body known as the *aura*. Intuition arises from the right hemisphere of the brain, the same part of us that connects with art, music, poetry, dancing, emotions, proprioception, and all the other senses. When we open up a channel to connect with that deep, creative aspect of ourselves, we can listen to our body's wisdom and unlock secrets. We can ascertain who we are, where we are on our journey, and where we want to go from there. Because intuition is a subtle feeling or a little voice, it can be hard to hear. Unfortunately, for this reason, it can also be dangerously easy to ignore, especially with modern society's loud volume about what we should and shouldn't be.

Intuition is not the same thing as instinct, though they're related. Instinct implies a visceral, animalistic reaction or urge. Instinct is what makes you duck from a tennis ball flying in your direction. Instinct is connected to animalistic feelings such as wanting to fight, run (take flight), and become immobile (freeze), as well as the desire to have sex. Intuition, on the other hand, is generally less animalistic. It involves a complex mental processing in the parts of the brain that many other animals don't have. Intuition is more of a subtle intake of the environment that includes instinct, a sensing of energy, a sense of timing, and much more.

Intuition isn't the same as paranoia or being triggered from past traumas. It's also not related to any obsessive compulsiveness or an irrational fear. For example, if you need to reach someone, you may experience a compulsion to send an email as soon as possible, but your intuition may tell you to wait a day and see how the energy feels. The difference between the two impulses lies in the energy—fear-based feelings like compulsion have a dreadful quality or a nagging, compulsive tone. Intuition is not fear-based. It comes from a place of self-respect, which is love-based.

Being intuitive isn't the same as being psychic. Intuition is available to everyone, whereas the psychic arts are a more rarefied and advanced path. Psychic abilities are not necessarily considered a goal in intuitive witchcraft, though

psychic moments and experiences are bound to occur, especially when we're in higher states of energy. Chapter 11 will discuss that path in more detail, should you choose to walk it.

Last, intuition is not the same thing as your conscience. A conscience advocates for total honesty and helps us evaluate what's morally right in our respective societies. On the other hand, intuition advocates for *self-honesty* and tells us what's right for us, despite what society thinks. With our conscience leading the way, we'd never lie about anything, because it'd be morally wrong. But if you don't trust someone, your intuition may tell you it's okay to lie to them in order to protect yourself until you can get away from them. Lying can feel like a betrayal to the conscience, and it can cause turmoil in the brain. At times, acting on intuition as opposed to the conscience is in our best interests. Another way to look at these two internal voices is that we're all born with intuition, but society gives us a conscience. This becomes clearer if you compare the rules of different cultures—what's right in one society can be deadly wrong in another.

Intuition and Our Ancestors

For a long time in human history, intuition and freedom of thought were forced underground. Every war, famine, pestilence, plague, religious persecution, and injustice our ancestors faced made the fear-based part of their brains take over to help them handle the hard times. Intuition was not a highly valued trait, compared to, say, strength, the ability to work on a farm, or the inclination to go to war.

Intuition didn't disappear, though. It became sublimated in the form of folk tales, fables, and superstitions. Like a seed or a spore in the dark soil of humanity, it merely waited for the right conditions to emerge again in all its glory. I believe that now is the time when intuition can take root and be celebrated in the world. Most of us weren't taught to listen to our intuition, but we can start now by teaching ourselves. It's never too late. More people have freedom in this modern era than ever before. We can truly be ourselves and follow our spiritual paths without too much fear of persecution. It's high time we learned how to use the power of intuition for our benefit and for the benefit of the world.

Reclaiming Yourself

The first and most important step in intuitive witchcraft is finding yourself—or if you've lost yourself, re-finding yourself. By knowing who you are, you hold the keys to your own freedom. All magic starts with someone who is attuned to exactly who they are. However, if you don't know who you are, or if your uniqueness hasn't been nourished, we have some work to do.

If you're anything like me, you've lost your connection with your spirit a few times. It can be dangerously easy to do so. Life gets so busy sometimes that you barely have a free moment. Or maybe all your free time is spent recovering from your hectic life. If you're in one of these situations, you probably feel some emotional pain from time to time. You probably want life to be bigger and better than it is. That's okay—it's great, actually. One sign that you're finding your way back to who you really are is dissatisfaction with your status quo. It's a powerful indication from your intuition that you need to take steps toward a deeper, more spiritual life. After all, it's depth that gives our lives meaning. If you've arrived at this point, fear not. You're on the right path. Keep listening.

It's also important to not be too hard on ourselves. In this noisy, modern world, it can be difficult to hear our own voices. There are a million other voices telling us what we should do, how we should act, who we should be, and what we should buy. And guess what? None of those voices take precedence over your internal voice—your intuition.

Unbrainwash Yourself

Unbrainwashing is about truly seeing the conditionings and expectations of the reality perpetuated by media and society and rejecting whatever doesn't work for us. To some degree, everyone in our society has been brainwashed by our image-obsessed and commodified culture. Sometimes, this can be a good thing. For example, most of us know how to order food at a restaurant, how to behave at a job, and how to make small talk.

But there's also a part of societal conditioning that can damage us. It can encourage us to be shallow and to seek external approval at the cost of internal alignment. This creates a culture wherein only a small percentage of people meet societal approval. It also creates a shadow culture where many people don't feel good enough compared to them. Both sets of people have bought

into a conditionally loving society that doesn't want us to feel good about ourselves on purpose, so we can be sold products.

This is the society I'm asking you to reject. Although the images and portrayals of people in media could make us feel unworthy and unlovable, that's simply not true! No one is unworthy or unlovable. It's important to realize that highly commodified societies almost never work for personal benefit—most benefit businesses rather than people. However, we can reject the notion that we have to be thinner, with this kind of hair, with these kinds of lips, with this kind of body, with that income, and with these kinds of clothes. By disconnecting from these false expectations, we open a space within ourselves to reconnect to something deeper. We create room for loving ourselves as we are.

Question the things you've accepted in your life. For example, social media could be thought of as a good way to connect with other people, and almost everyone is expected to have a profile and log on. However, a recent study revealed that even in our age of social media and constant communication, nearly half of Americans feel lonely. Feelings of loneliness were especially found in younger generations, who have the highest use of social media.[1] Psychologists theorize that the problem with social media is the low quality of human interaction. We miss out on body language, facial cues, the warm tone of a voice, conversational responses, energy exchanges, the sound of laughter, sighs, and so much more. Go ahead and question society's expectation that you need to be online several times a day. You might find, as some psychologists did, that decreasing social media can also decrease feelings of depression and loneliness.[2]

When we question what's really going on energetically within ourselves, we can determine how we feel about it and make positive changes. We can be picky about which societal expectations we accept and which ones we reject. This helps us get back to basics. From a clean slate, we can build a higher quality life.

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1. Alexandra Lardieri, "Study: Many Americans Report Feeling Lonely, Younger Generations More So," *US News and World Report*, May 1, 2018, https://www.usnews.com/news/health-care-news/articles/2018-05-01/study-many-americans-report-feeling-lonely-younger-generations-more-so.
2. Melissa G. Hunt, Rachel Marx, Courtney Lipson, and Jordyn Young, "No More FOMO: Limiting Social Media Decreases Loneliness and Depression," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 37, no. 10 (November 2008): 751–68, doi:10.1521/jscp.2018.37.10.751.

Last, if you're a people pleaser and you try to make everyone happy, you've probably been brainwashed to prioritize yourself last. I used to be a people pleaser. It didn't change until I questioned why I wasn't valuing my own opinion and needs over others. Why wasn't I taught that the most important person to please is *myself*? Flight attendants say, "Secure your own air mask before attending to others." The same is true when it comes to people pleasing. You'll need to prioritize *self-service and self-care* before you can provide any service or care to others. If you've ever worked at any kind of customer service job or were raised in a strict religious upbringing, you'll probably have a harder time than most people when it comes to hearing your internal voice. It may be silent, or you may confuse your inner voice with the voice of an external "authority."[3] Rest assured that it is possible to remove that external source. It may take time, meditation, therapy, and more, but it's worth it.

If you've become disenchanted with the shallow world, that's good! It means your intuition is speaking, and you can hear it. You merely have to listen to it and figure out what's good for you and what's not. Listen to your gut. When we see certain negative aspects of society for what they are, our next actions become clear. We must cast off society's negative conditionings and expectations like worn-out cloaks so we can seek the wilderness within ourselves. That's where real magic lies.

Remove Toxic External Sources

The first step to hear one's inner voice better is to remove external sources of conditioning. Turn off the tablet, computer, television, and radio, with their ads and subtle messages about gender roles, race, sexuality, and acceptable body shapes. Unplug from anything that doesn't give you true pleasure, including shopping, games, and social media that brings you down. If you're not leaving an experience feeling better about yourself and how you spent your time, reevaluate its role in your life.

Next, take a hard look at your social life. Any friendship or other relationship that doesn't feed your soul needs to be evaluated. You know which ones I mean—the gossipers, the frenemies, the creeps, the people who think they

3. Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997).

have authority over you, and shallow people. Breaking off these superficial relationships may not seem like an important task right now, but a person's community really does affect who they are. It has been said that we're an average of the five people we interact with the most. If that's true, who are you an amalgam of? Think of the five people in your life. Are they nice, supportive, spiritual people? Are they even trying to be decent people? Or are they neutral, chaotic, selfish, or authoritarian? Do they encourage you to chase your dreams and to do what makes you happy or just sit on the sidelines and not make any plays?

Another reason why you'll want to limit your exposure to toxic people is to reduce the mirror neuron effect. Our brains copy other people. Even though it's unconscious, we replicate other people's body language, facial expressions, energy, words, accents, phrasings, and more. For example, if you hang out with a nervous or paranoid person, you may find yourself growing more nervous and paranoid because you're matching their energy. This can be especially problematic for empaths, or people who feel others' energies and emotions deeply. If you're an empath, cutting toxic people out of your life is a very important task. You'll need to reduce exposure to those people more than anyone else. As an empath, I can tell you that it's hard, but it can be done. I've always felt that having no friends is better than having fake or bad friends.

If you can't cut people out of your life entirely, at least distance yourself from them or take breaks from time to time. That separation can give you the objectivity you need to see your relationships as they truly are. Just remember—this journey is about you and prioritizing yourself and your needs above other people and their needs. You need to be able to hear your own internal voice above the noise of the world. Keep that as a goal. The more you honor your intuition about whom to let walk with you, the sooner you'll be on the path of the intuitive witch.

Remove Toxic Internal Sources

Toxic sources can be internal as well as external. Go deep and look at your internal programming. What thoughts arise in your mind when you're not paying attention? Are they positive or negative? Release your negative thoughts, especially if they reoccur over time and if they cycle in loops. Negative thoughts attract more negativity to you, so it has to go.

Don't let your dissatisfaction with society become your dissatisfaction with yourself. In other words, don't let society's voice or your parents' voices become your internal voice. You can reject their expectations and create your own value system, one in which you're a good person who deserves love and respect.

EXERCISE

RELEASE THE BONDS OF THE PAST

Take a hard look at your life and the ways in which you spend your time. Is anyone or anything causing you stress or making you feel down? Can you take actions to remove them? Even if you can only reduce your exposure to the person or thing, you're taking a huge step in the right direction. Replace the time you had spent with that person or thought with an activity that feeds your soul, like reading, writing, dancing, or gardening.

Rewilding

Now that the junk has been removed, we can get back to basics. Rewilding is like letting yourself be a kid again, only you're parenting yourself with a completely different set of principles. The goal is to get you in touch with feeling free and wild! What makes you feel free? How do tap into your wildness? Let yourself feel animalistic, sensual, and instinctive. Enjoy pleasures, notice your reactions, and be bold with your love. Enjoy the feeling of having more freedom. Some people liken the expression of the wild spirit to having animalistic features. Do you want to howl at the moon or growl sometimes? Try it out and see how it feels. Don't be surprised if you encounter some wild magic and vast reserves of energy in this process. The best thing about rewilding is that we can get in touch with our own magical energy, which may have been hidden or dormant for many years.

Seek Wilderness

One of the best ways to rewild yourself is to go into nature. Take a hike by yourself and appreciate the wilderness. Feel the breeze, the sun, and the earth. Dip your fingers or toes into fresh running water. Feel the energy of the rocks and the plants around you. If you can, find a secret place and just be with the

wilderness. Observe the animals and plants as they exist in their natural state. Immersion in nature gives you an elemental cleansing. It's so refreshing to connect with a natural space that expects nothing from you and shares all its splendor. Scientific studies show that we benefit from spending time in nature. I believe this is because it replenishes a wild part of us that may be linked to ancestral experiences.

Wild Expressions

Use your intuition to figure out what rewilding means to you and how you can express it. Here are a few ideas of things you can do to rewild yourself:

- ★ Start a journal and write as if no one will ever read it.
- ★ Get in touch with your feelings and clear your mind.
- ★ Ask yourself what you really want. It's okay to desire material successes, but that doesn't provide lasting happiness. Consider other goals, such as true friendships, creative pursuits, and spiritual satisfaction.
- ★ Spend time alone and in silence.
- ★ Meditate.
- ★ Dance.
- ★ Play.
- ★ Consider speaking with a therapist if you feel that will assist you.
- ★ Pretend to be an animal or to have more animalistic senses.
- ★ Spend time around animals, whose instincts are more intact compared to ours.
- ★ Play with children or hang out with people who are freer than you.

Spiritual Origin Stories

One of the best ways to get in touch with your intuitive self is to look at your spiritual origin story. How did you know you were different, that you wanted more from life than what popular reality had to give? What was your favorite way to connect with spirit? Examining your answers can remind how you came to walk your path in the first place.

For me, my spirituality was clear as far back as I can remember. One of my first memories was when my mother brought me to a Christian church, when

I was about four or five. When everyone else sang "amen," I sang "a-women," in a clear, high, little voice. As I sang, I flashed a smile to the people around me, inviting them to join in and sing "a-women" with me. I remember thinking that all these people were worshipping the divine masculine, and no one was worshipping the divine feminine. It was a travesty! I wanted to tell them that it was okay to worship her—I knew it was, because I felt it deep in my bones. Strangely enough, no one in the church ever sang "a-women" with me.

I decided at that young age that I would worship the divine feminine, and I haven't looked back since. Maybe you have a spiritual origin story like this. Many of us witches do, which makes me wonder if paganism and witchcraft are indeed an orientation that some of us are born with.

Cultivate Your Atmosphere

Whenever you have any free time, create an atmosphere of freedom. Be as free as possible. Wear whatever clothes you want, listen to your favorite music, speak your mind, burn incense, and do whatever else you like. The feeling that's created by celebrating these freedoms is what I call your *atmosphere*. Good atmospheres can help our wild, intuitive selves feel more comfortable and relaxed. A good atmosphere in your home can help you transition into your intuitive self after having worked all day.

Your atmosphere might make you feel like a child again. When you were little, it's possible you screamed at strangers, laughed too loud, stared, shied away from one of your parent's friends, or stated the obvious in a nonjudgmental way. That wilder, childish part of us has been tamed by our well-meaning parents and society. We were taught to tone down the wild behavior, to hug or kiss the strange person, to not laugh too loudly, and to not speak out about our curiosities. These aren't bad lessons necessarily, but they're not what comes naturally to us. We need to get back to a more natural, intuitive state to shake things up. This doesn't mean we leave modern society; it just gives us more freedom to choose what we accept and how we work with it. Think back to the happiest moments of your childhood and how you felt then.

You could think of your atmosphere as a slightly different version of reality. Ultimately, it should instill a feeling of freedom of expression. It should make you feel expansive. Revel in the freedom to do whatever you want. Align

yourself to a more relaxed energy. When you use your free time to do what you want and do the things that feed your soul, you encourage the wild self to come out and play. If you want to dance, dance! If you want to walk around naked in your own home, do so. Play and be free. Don't be afraid to be real or silly. Or really silly.

Reintegrating Back into Society

After you've experienced a taste of the wilderness, you may feel a little strange when you're back in the public sphere. The dissonance between you and society can be a little disconcerting at times. Clarissa Pinkola Estés captures this thought rather beautifully in her book *Women Who Run with the Wolves*: "I wore a dress and a hat to church. But my fabulous tail often fell below my hemline, and my ears twitched until my hat pitched, at the very least, down over my eyes, and sometimes clear across the room."[4]

It's nearly impossible to hide an inner wilderness. Some people will smell it on you and will be drawn to you like moths to a flame. Other people will be instantly repelled by you, through no fault of your own. You simply won't fit into their ideas, plots, dreams, and schemes. That's okay—in fact, it's better than okay. It's great! It means you finally figured out how to trust your inner wilderness. Besides, those people's concepts are their own, and most times, they won't suit you anyway.

Even though you may experience dissonance in the world by being your wild, lovely self, keep going out with your new wisdom. Carry the wild self with you. When you're more yourself than the person they want you to be, it won't matter what others think. You'll have the security of your inner knowing, which is greater than the applause of every single person in the whole, wide world. The concept of wilderness is a common topic in modern magic. The ability to turn it on in ritual and magical practices will only help you become a stronger witch.

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4. Clarissa Pinkola Estés, *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 4.

JOURNALING EXERCISE

SPIRITUAL ORIGINS

What were you like as a child? What did you believe in and like to do? Did you have your own spirituality? What spiritual experiences did you have? What activities can you do to recover the joy of being a child again? Write or think about your childhood with love and compassion for your younger self. Remember what you liked and bring that back into your life. For example, if you loved to blow bubbles on a sunny day, you'd better get some bubbles. When you eventually partake of this childhood activity, find the joy you had long ago.

Get in Touch with Your Intuition

If you're like most people in the world, your intuition has been buried beneath layers of second-guessing, societal conditioning, and mental reprocessing. It may only emerge as a quiet voice that's hushed before it's even acknowledged. But it's still there, deep within us. Even if we've been taught to doubt ourselves, the voice is there, speaking, always. It's time to acknowledge that your inner voice is the highest authority that has your best interests at heart and that knows more about you than anyone else ever will. It may take some training to reinstate intuition as your guiding light, but it's worth it.

Read the Body

The gut is the main place where we can tap into our intuition. When your belly is relaxed, it's an indication that you feel safe and you can access more energy to do whatever you need to do. If your gut is tight, however, this means you're uncomfortable, you're stressed, or your instincts are warning you of danger. Make it a habit to check in with your gut several times a day. When you're presented with a decision, ask your gut what to do, and feel your body's reactions.

The gut isn't the only place we feel intuition, though. We can also sense intuition throughout our entire bodies. The body interprets our energy and emotions, and often, it acts on its own. For example, when I feel uncertain about something, my toes spread out, as if they're trying to help me find my balance. When I'm nervous, I comb my hair with my fingers or reach for my necklace in a subconscious effort to procrastinate or shield my heart. I find that my body cowers back from some people unconsciously. Sometimes, my eyes

feel strained all of the sudden, as if they don't want to see what's happening. There are also times when I feel so tired that I start yawning. All these signs of unease or discomfort are important and should be heeded as warnings.

On the other hand, when I feel good, my heart feels lighter in my chest. My toes curl, my chest melts forward, my spine straightens to a neutral position. I smile naturally, and there's barely a stiff muscle within my body. I feel inspired, as if I have so much energy that I could stay up all night long. I lean into conversations with my lovely friends and feel an electric energy dancing between us. These expansive feelings are key indicators that things are going well.

Being in the body helps us be aware of these subtle emotions, reactions, and shifts. Consult your intuition by reading your body whenever you feel lost. It'll give you a clear direction on which way to go.

Intuitive Choices

Every day, from the moment we wake up to the time we drift asleep, we're presented with choices. Do you get out of bed and start the day early, or do you shut off the alarm and dream a little longer? Do you anoint yourself with jasmine oil or frankincense oil? Do you wear colorful clothing or all black? Do you take the fastest way into work or take the scenic route—the one with flowers in bloom? Do you make small talk at work, or would you rather be alone to do other things? All these choices add up. We can have a very different day depending on which paths we choose.

Whenever we're presented with choices, we have the ability to tap into our intuition to decide. Our first hunches and reactions about situations are more often right than not.[5] Go with that first feeling rather than the second, third, or fourth thought (which could more accurately be called second-guessing, third-guessing, etc.). The path of intuition always leads in the right direction. Ask yourself what you really want, listen, and trust. Your gut will tell you what to do.

Give Your Gut Permission to Change Its Mind

I'll never forget the most stressful job I ever had, nor will I forget my body's reaction to it. Every day, on the car ride into work, my stomach cramped up.

5. Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking* (New York: Little, Brown, 2005), 14.

It was so tight that it felt as if someone were tying my stomach and intestines in knots. The closer I got to work, the bigger the knot. Every day, the cramps seemed to get worse. Can you guess what my body was trying to tell me about how I really felt about that job?

I had been ignoring my gut reaction and was in complete denial about how bad that job was. I was wearing metaphorical blinders. I couldn't see the stress that job was causing me. It was only when I paid attention to the symptoms that I saw what was happening. My "gut feeling" was saying that the job wasn't good for me. It was something I had to acknowledge rather than ignore. And so, I started looking for another job. On my last day of work at the stressful place, I felt so free. I only wish I'd have listened to my gut earlier. If I'd been honest with myself about my working situation, I might've saved myself years of stress.

Looking back, I realize that my stomach cramps didn't start happening overnight. The job had started out great, but then something changed. There was no one inciting incident, only a building unease and several small things that were unnerving.

It's important to be aware of how our environments, people, and places can change over time. One day, your gut may tell you someone is an ally, but the next, maybe you're not so sure. Maybe there's something about the energy exchange that feels different—perhaps you see a hint of a predator, or the energy doesn't feel good or safe anymore.

Don't ignore the signs just because they weren't there previously. Stay alert. Whenever I feel like I want to run away from a situation, it's a sure sign that something doesn't feel right about it. Give yourself permission to run away if you feel like it.

EXERCISE

LISTENING TO THE BODY

Find a quiet place and get into a comfortable position. Take a few deep breaths. Let your awareness sink into your body. Occupy the space, from your toes to your scalp. Where are you holding tension? Breathe into one of those areas and listen. What is the tension telling you? Listen to the tension. Let it speak. What is it saying? Find the wisdom hidden within. Offer that body part the opportunity to relax before moving

on to listen to the next body part that is holding tension. Finish by giving yourself a hug and doing something nice for your body, like taking a walk or treating yourself to a little dessert.

Radical Self-Acceptance

To your intuition be true. What does that mean to you? Now that you can hear your intuition and know more of who you are, it's time to be true to yourself through radical self-acceptance. Being brutally honest about who you are and where you are on your journey can be hard, but living in denial is much worse. The goal of radical self-acceptance is to become clear about who we are at this stage in our lives and to work with that. It means being present and okay with where we are. We don't have to love our present state, but we should be able to appreciate it in one way or another.

Take stock of yourself emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually. What's working? What's stressing you out? Look at everything and be honest. What does your body tell you? How do you really feel? When we practice total awareness and radical self-acceptance, we acknowledge the emotions lurking in the shadows instead of avoiding them. In doing so, we come into a place where we can actually make changes for the better. It's okay to not be perfect. No one is. We're all human beings doing the best we can. Give yourself permission to be less than perfect.

Accept Contradictions

A wise witch knows that contradictions aren't as oppositional as they may seem. Contradictions can coexist. For example, you might be smart about some things and clueless about others. Maybe you like to celebrate the winter solstice *and* Christmas. My book of shadows, with its pithy message on the cover, "Carpe That Diem," is both silly and deeply meaningful to me.

We all have contradictions to one degree or another, and that's okay. They don't have to be reconciled, and you don't have to choose between one or another. It's liberating to embrace your complexity. Besides, if you ignore conflicting parts of yourself, it's nearly impossible to feel whole. This practice of accepting contradictions is radical self-acceptance on an even higher level. When we can accept what seem like dualities within ourselves, we have the power to not be limited by them or judge ourselves as lacking. Our understandings of the

world can transcend the limitations and embrace something more mystical. For example, we're spirits inhabiting the physical world. There's no need to solve that problem, and no need to worry about any other co-existing dualities.

Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome is a psychological term that describes when people are afraid that their accomplishments are unearned and that some or all of what they do is ingenuine, inadequate, or fraudulent. These people are hyperaware of their perceived errors, which usually aren't errors at all. They have hyperconscious brains and may never have felt supported in their lives. For whatever reason, they've given all of their authority to others and are afraid to do anything except what's expected of them and what's considered "normal." Usually, imposter syndrome is accompanied by shame, anxiety, confidence issues, self-doubt, and insecurity.[6]

This is a sad example of what happens when the world is successful in removing intuition and inner knowing. If you think you have imposter syndrome, you *must* be courageous and regain your intuition. Whether you were raised to think you are powerless, or if you chose that powerless path for yourself, it's time to realize that you are a smart, capable person. You must give yourself the support and unconditional love you may not have had as a child. Go deep into your internal wisdom about what you feel. Face your fears head on. You don't need approval from anyone but yourself. You have wisdom deep within you and the ability to work with it. Moreover, you have the ability to grasp the reins of your life.

Everyone was born with intuition. There's something inside of us that feels energy and spirituality, and we can use that to create positive change in our lives. Every time we experience a sense of wonder or a spark from within, we're experiencing intuition. We can proceed with that knowing by choosing the paths that feel best suited for us. If you have imposter syndrome, your path will likely involve metaphorical rock scaling. It may be hard work, but you must find some way over the oppressive boulders that have been dropped in your psyche. I recommend going to a supportive therapist to talk about any

6. Joe Langford and Pauline Rose Clance, "The Impostor Phenomenon: Recent Research Findings Regarding Dynamics, Personality, and Family Patterns and their Implications for Treatment," *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 30, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 495–501.

problems you may be having. They can help you face your fears and overcome problems. They can also help you get in touch with how you really feel and give you methods and tools to grow. It's okay to ask for help. One of the reasons why I know they're so helpful is because I've been to a few therapists myself. I learned a lot from each one, and they made me stronger.

If you experience imposter syndrome, write in your journal more often to express yourself. You may also want to meditate on the mantra "I believe in myself" until you start to actually believe in yourself and trust your inner voice. I believe everyone can overcome imposter syndrome. You can do it! Yes, you. I'm rooting for you 100 percent. All these activities may sound like hard work, but it's the good hard work that lets us live more empowered lives.

JOURNALING EXERCISE
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

In two columns, write down your strengths and weaknesses. Dig deep and name them all until you can't think of any others. When you're finished, stare at them with soft eyes and take several deep breaths. Radically accept them. Accept yourself as you are in this moment. Don't judge. Being aware of who you are and what you can do gives you the ability to know yourself completely. Without this wisdom, you won't get far in life or witchcraft.

Hold Steady to Your Intuition

Have you ever had a gut feeling and then changed your mind, only to regret it? Did you ever say, "I wish I would've followed my intuition"? Maybe you had a moment of weakness, or perhaps you were following the crowd. The regret you may experience from not following your intuition can be devastating, especially when you "knew better."

When we make decisions that go against our intuition, it's a sign that we need to rewild and hear that internal voice again. Trading our internal feelings for external validation means we're giving up our intuition. We're saying our intuition and our feelings aren't as important as what someone else thinks. That's one of the greatest ways we rob ourselves from having rich lives.

When you find yourself backsliding into the realm of popular reality and everyone else's expectations, it can be helpful to question everything you

encounter. Do you really want to order fried food, or do you want to stick with your intuition to get the green plate? Do you really need to play a supportive role with that frenemy, or should you walk away? Do you really believe you should be letting someone tell you what to do, even though they aren't your boss?

When we don't listen to our intuition, we might just be falling out of sync with other things in life as well. It's possible that your self-care has been missing for days, weeks, or even months or that your friendship with someone has turned sour and you haven't realized it because you don't want to see it. It's even possible that your witchy practice of lighting a candle every Sunday night has been neglected for several months, or you skipped celebrating a full moon without a second thought. These aren't terrible things, but they can be signs that life is moving too quickly or that you're distracted. They can tell us that we might be feeling overwhelmed.

If you experience these kinds of regrets often, you're probably suspect to a certain amount of conditioning that tells you to ignore your intuition. It'll show up again and again, and in sneakier ways, telling you that you don't need to follow your intuition. However, when we see this cover-up for what it is, the best course of action is to stick with our intuition and deep inner knowing. Don't let outside influences talk you out of your gut feelings. Don't second-guess yourself. Hold steady in the darkness and keep looking for the light of your intuition to guide you. Go with your gut, always.

When Intuition Is Unclear

There may be times when you can't hear the message your intuition seems to be telling you. If you seem to be caught up between two choices, this can be confusing and maddening. When this happens, take a break. Do something completely different and come back to it. With objectivity, you'll soon be able to see the best choice.

There will also be times when your intuition might lead you astray or will appear to lead you in the wrong direction. For me, this usually happens in the company of casual friends and other people who don't believe in intuition. I've found that talking about energy and magical things among those people can be a mistake. Their negative emotions drain my magic until I barely feel anything at all. Of course, if you're not an empath, or if you take pleasure in being

the bold iconoclast, this may not happen as much. If that's the case, share your intuition freely, boldly, and wildly.

You may also come across various physical places where you feel energy that was left there, which has nothing to do with you. I'll never forget the time my boyfriend planned a day trip for us. He packed a picnic basket, which rattled in the back of our Volkswagen bus. As we drove up and down the rolling hills of Magnolia, the cool Seattle neighborhood, I clutched the dashboard in fear. My heart thundered in my chest, and I could barely breathe. I felt as if there were no land beneath us, as if we were driving on air. He noticed my panic, parked the bus, and suggested we get out and take a walk. I barely made it two blocks before I asked him if we could leave. The earth simply didn't feel stable beneath my feet. I was afraid an earthquake was going to demolish the entire peninsula. We drove out of there without an earthquake happening and ate our picnic somewhere that didn't feel as if it were going to crumble at any moment.

Needless to say, I wasn't swallowed by an earthquake that day. The neighborhood of Magnolia still stands to this very day. While it's possible that I may have felt a subtle earthquake that day, I have no way of backing it up. My intuition about the place was simply wrong, or at least mysterious. It's possible I picked up on some residual bad energy there, but it's hard to say why I felt that way.

When your intuition seems to be wrong, it could be a sign that you need to ground and center. Don't be too hard on yourself if this happens randomly from time to time. We can't explain everything. Just make the best of your situation and keep going with the gut.

Triggers That Shut Down Intuition

It can be helpful to identify triggers that shut down your intuition. You'll feel this as a contracting energy. For example, one common trigger for most people is old family dynamics. Just the sound of someone's father yelling from the other room can make some people's muscles contract, even if it's a peaceful situation. A common trigger for introverts is to be around too many people for too long. They'll literally start shutting down. Other common triggers are people with strong energy or people who always manage to step on your boundaries, yet never actually cross them.

People and things that trigger us aren't always terrible on purpose. Many people are trying to get through the day, just like we are. But it's important to realize that you don't have to put up with their interferences to your intuition.

Identify people, places, and situations that trigger you. It's helpful to have some coping skills ready. Some of these coping skills could include practices that help you release your trepidations and feel expansive. What can you do to let you feel expansive again? This might include listening to music, going to a yoga class, smelling an essential oil blend, or talking with a friend. These releasing and opening practices support our mundane lives and our magical lives as well. Figure out how often you need to feel expansive in your daily life for you to be able to be grounded and intuitive.

Turn Up Your Intuition

Besides intuitive choices, there are a few ways to turn up the volume of your intuition. One of the best ways to do this is to practice being in your body. For some people, this won't be a problem, but for others, who feel as if they live in their head or in the energy around them, this could be a challenge.

Start being present in your body by feeling every muscle and square inch of your skin. What do your toes feel like? What does the back of your left shoulder feel like? What is your belly doing? Are your shoulders hunched up, or down and relaxed? Is your spine aligned? Are you holding tension anywhere? If so, ask yourself why you have tension in your body. What does it mean? Does it clue you into a feeling or a memory? Daydream about it, exploring any feelings that come up. Often, tension, or tight energy, is repressed energy. It can act as a shield, protecting you against someone or something you don't feel safe with. Tight energy can also be an emotion you've repressed because you can't deal with it at the moment.

Another good way to practice being in your body is to give yourself a hug or a light massage or rub. You can also say something to ground yourself in the moment. Whenever my mind spins out of control, there's nothing better than saying something like, "Here I am, sitting in my car, not knowing what to do." By simply stating the words, I become more grounded in my body and can be aware of how I feel. If I run my hands over my arms or legs, I become even more grounded in the present moment.

You can also turn up your intuition by becoming more aware of your emotions. Take a deep breath and acknowledge them. State the emotion in a way that doesn't give it power over you. Say "I'm feeling sad" instead of "I'm sad." It may seem like a small difference, but the first is a temporary feeling, while the latter statement is a condition of who you are as a person. Don't let emotions take control over you. With time and practice, you can choose whether it's wise to interact with them or let them be.

Think about the people and places you encounter the most. Feel your emotions and your body's reaction to these—do you become relaxed or restless when you think of them? Does the thought of them make you hold energy somewhere? Why do you feel this way?

Other ways to turn up your intuition include taking a walk or listening to music without lyrics. Try to be aware and experience the present moment, witnessing whatever arises. Whenever possible, revel in your atmosphere and get into your good feelings so you know what that feels like, in contrast to the bad feelings. If possible, talk with a friend who can help with your awareness about your intuition.

JOURNALING EXERCISE
ACKNOWLEDGING AND RELEASING TRIGGERS

Write down your triggers, or what makes you contract and step out of your intuition. Write down activities that help you feel expansive and release tension. Experiment with releases to find what works for you and how often you need them. For example, perhaps you need to go to yoga once a week, or maybe you need to meditate every day for five minutes. Be wise about what you put up with and don't carry it around with you.

Listening to the Little Voice

Intuition is clearly an important and sometimes slippery thing. Listening to our bodies and hearts makes it more likely that we'll be in touch with our own desires and not the desires of the world around us. When you find yourself falling back into the programming of the mundane world, or if you start getting triggered and feel as if you're losing yourself, remove the societal conditioning once again. Take steps to rewild, expand, and come back to your intuition. Listen to

your awesome inner knowing and find your way back to the enchanted forest within yourself. Be yourself, and be brave. You got this.

RITUAL

THE PROMISE TO FOLLOW INTUITION

Think about what color candle would represent your intuition and purchase it. Light the candle in a dark room. Center yourself by being in your body, and take several deep breaths. Speak the words out loud: "Today I make a promise to myself. I will follow my intuition. I will be true to myself." Repeat it two more times and feel it sink into your consciousness.

At this point, consider making additional promises to yourself, such as more self-care or no more negative talk. If you doubted your worth before, see yourself as you wish to be—confident, knowing, and happy. Hold the image as long as possible, then blow the candle out. Light the candle again any time you need to boost your self-confidence and intuition.

Further Reading List

Brown, Brené. *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead.* New York: Avery, 2012.

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Chapter 2

Working with Energy

So far, we've cast off our societal conditionings like worn-out cloaks. We've flushed the toxic sources from our lives. We've opened ourselves up to feeling wild and hearing our intuitions more than ever before. Now, it's time to look at the language of the universe—energy.

The second tenet of intuitive witchcraft is you are energy: seek understanding, balance, and alignment of your own energy. Everything in the universe is made of energy, including ourselves. Energy is often misunderstood because there are limitations on our abilities to sense it, even though it's everywhere and everything. Much of this book will be concerned with subtle, invisible energies, such as will, spiritual energy, chi, spirits, and the gods. Since we can't see, hear, taste, touch, or smell those things, many people are less likely to believe in their existence. However, there are many invisible types of energy that we use every day, including radio waves, cellular data, ultraviolet and infrared rays, microwaves, radiation, and many more. Likewise, some sounds are inaudible to us, like dog whistles or subsonic frequencies. We also can't smell all the molecules that make up the air we breathe unless there's a sufficient amount of them, nor can we witness the chemical reactions that happen within the earth's crust nor see the earth's magnetic fields that are visible to birds. Just because we can't sense these things doesn't make them any less real. These invisible energies exist. They exert influences on us every day. Many of our intangible developments and discoveries are less than a hundred years old. If science continues to advance, it's probable that future inventions and discoveries will reveal even more subtle energies.

In order to think about these energies, we must examine ourselves and the world energetically, just like the scientists who developed the technologies to measure those mysterious energies we use every day. The radical scientist Nikola Tesla reportedly said, "If you want to learn the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency, and vibration."[7] After listening to your intuition, being aware of your energy is perhaps the most important lesson about intuitive witchcraft. Tuning in to yourself can help you ascertain the truth of the present moment.

We begin our adventure by evaluating the energy within ourselves and the energy of our surroundings in order to understand it and eventually manipulate it. This chapter contains a basic overview of energy. It might be a bit "beginner level" for some people, and you may want to skim the pages—or maybe not. I've found that when I review information I've already learned, I can still sometimes gain new insights. As always with intuitive witchcraft, the choice is yours.

Energy Types and the Witch's Hat

The different forms of energy that we humans experience were first illuminated by the psychologist Abraham Maslow, who designed a pyramid depicting the hierarchy of human needs.[8] To make this more relatable to our kin, instead of a pyramid, we're going to use a witch's hat. Physical energy requirements and tasks sit at the bottom of the hat, making up the brim. Emotional energy is above that, making the ribbon area; mental energy requirements are placed a little higher; and spiritual energy rests at the pointy top. Together, they represent the life energies. The placement of these categories generally reflects the amount of time and maintenance that those tasks and activities require.

Physical Energy

Physical energy is the most common form of energy we can experience. It can be felt in the warmth of a sunbeam, in the power of a gust of wind, and as the gravity that pulls us back to the earth when we jump up in the air. Physical

7. This quote is attributed to Nikola Tesla by Ralph Bergstresser, who claimed Tesla said it in 1942. "Universal Energy of Vibrations," *Reflection*, July/August 1998, 22.

8. Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50 (1943): 370–96.

energy can be seen in the movement of the earth, the moon, the sun, and the tides. There's no denying that physical energy occurrences happen, because we can often see the cause and effect of them and can sometimes feel them as well. They can be studied more accurately than any other energy, and with a greater sense of precision too. You might think of physics when you hear the term *physical energy*, and you wouldn't be wrong to do so. Just keep in mind that not all physical energy is tactile.

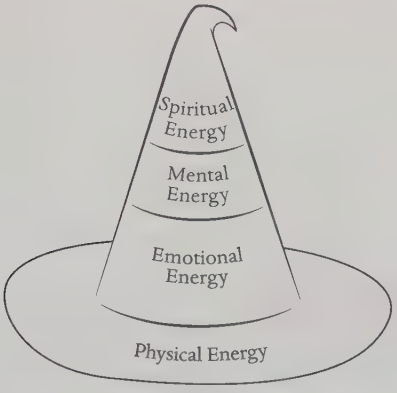

Figure 1: The Witch's Hat: Types of Human Energy, Organized by Hierarchy

One example of physical energy that's close to home is our body's internal combustion. Food gives us energy to perform physical activities, such as planting a garden, taking a walk, or reading a book. Physical energy is also expressed by our bodies as heat. When the energy from the food has been spent, our energy is depleted. We feel hunger, eat, and the cycle repeats.

Our physical energy needs include feeling safe, sleeping, eating healthful foods, having access to clean water, exercise, resting, clean air, good hygiene, and possibly even sex. Performing these acts assists in helping our bodies function properly and creates a good, neutral state in order for us to want to achieve more and bigger things. It makes sense that physical energy transactions are at the bottom. We have to perform a lot of physical tasks every day to take care of our bodies. We have to go to work and pay bills. We have to wash laundry and dishes. Maybe we have a pet or child, or a few of them. It's safe to say that the majority of our time is spent taking care of physical energy tasks.

EXERCISE

LISTENING TO THE BODY'S REACTIONS

Select a couple of small edible items, such as an apple, a granola bar, a container of takeout food, and a bag of chips. Think about whether the food is good for you or not. Stand in a neutral position with your spine straight, and hold one item near your heart. Close your eyes and feel the energy of the object. You'll either start to tip forward or backward. Our bodies tip forward toward healthy food and tip backward or away from unhealthful food. Did your body's answers match your thoughts about the food's healthfulness? You might be surprised by what your body feels is healthful and what you think is healthful. This exercise confirms that intuitive, energetic knowledge exists deep within the body.

Emotional Energy

We can feel energy as emotions. There's no denying that emotions are real, and they have a huge influence on how we feel. For instance, there's a big difference between feeling like you have a lot of positive energy and that you can do anything, and feeling low or depressed, like you're stuck to the sofa. Emotional energy is quite different from physical energy, though. It's more subtle and ephemeral, and we have fewer ways to quantify it.

A lot of people are quick to shortchange emotional energy as not being "real," but in the past thirty years, science has been making a lot of breakthroughs in this area. Through the mapping of bodies in different emotional states, scientists have confirmed that people have different physiological expressions when they experience different emotions.[9] Extreme emotions such as anger or fear are expressed as tightened muscles. Cortisol, the stress hormone, courses through the body. Sadness creates a depletion of energy, as well as a hollow, empty-feeling heart. Happiness exhibits a relaxed, uplifting feeling in the entire body, as well as the production of bliss chemicals such as dopamine and serotonin. Emotions change our physical state, our body's chemistry, and how receptive we are to the world around us. In kind, the world responds to our emotional energetic state.

9. Rachel Nuwer, "Different Emotional States Manifest in Different Spots in the Human Body," *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 31, 2013, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/different-emotional-states-manifest-in-different-spots-in-the-human-body-180948225.

Our emotional needs include friendship, self-love, unconditional love, a sense of security or feeling safe, the feeling of being understood, the feeling of being respected, and belonging in a community. Emotional energetic levels can be indicators of social maturity, emotional strength, and confidence. When we can use our emotional wisdom to work with the world, instead of raging against it or cowering in fear, we have true emotional resilience. Emotional growth may be hard, but the lessons we need to learn will likely surface again and again until we deal with them.

The biggest task or activity for most people, emotionally, is finding and maintaining relationships that will give us satisfying experiences to fill our emotional needs. These relationships include friends, love, companions, your community, work alliances, and family. However, just as we need this emotional community, we also need a healthy amount of time alone for reflection.

Emotional energy is highly connected to our physical energetic state and is built upon that physical energy foundation. In other words, a good physical energy foundation will lead to a better emotional energetic state. Take good care of your body, and you'll feel better emotionally, naturally. Someone who skips physical tasks or ignores physical signs will likely be missing emotional awareness and strengths too. For example, if you don't feel physically safe, you probably won't feel emotionally safe, either. The link between the two might seem blatantly obvious to us readers, but emotional signs aren't always clear. This is because, as you may recall, the brain filters out information, burying intuition beneath layers of doubt and second-guessing. This gets even more complicated when there are different types of energy at play.

To give you an example of how much emotion can change a situation, I'll share a story about the times I walked on hot coals: once when I was feeling despondent and once when I was ecstatic.

Two Very Different Fire Walks

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to walk on hot coals on the last day of a fire dancing festival. I'd spent days taking fire dancing lessons and camping with my friends. Every night, we stayed up late, burned our fire tools, and marveled at the grace of other fire dancers. Just before dawn, we trudged back to our tents and fell asleep, only to be awakened a couple of hours later by a blistering hot sun and very excited birds.

After a few nights of burning the candle at both ends, one of my best friends asked if I wanted to walk on hot coals with her. My intuition told me to stay at the campsite and take a nap, but her enthusiasm was so strong that I brushed my intuition aside and went.

At least a hundred people were gathered in a circle in a dusky field. Fire tenders fed logs to a massive, crackling bonfire. The presenter gave an inspiring speech, then told us to pair up with a partner. I paired with my enthusiastic friend. We were supposed to look into each other's eyes and confess our deepest desires in the whole world. She went first, spilling her heart about her desire to open a bakery, of all things. I nodded encouragingly, holding her hands and giving her emotional support.

From across the field, the presenter interrupted everyone. He said something like, "Make sure you dig deep. If you want to open a bakery, *that's* what you need to be talking about!"

My friend lit up like a firecracker. She shouted, "That's what I want to do! I want to open a bakery!" She ran to tell the presenter and several other people about it. I watched her gush about the kismet occurrence and remember feeling happy for her.

However, when it came time to trade places, and it was my turn to talk about my hopes and dreams, she was nowhere to be found. I glanced around at the other people, who were speaking from their hearts, crying, laughing, and hugging each other. A feeling of abandonment came over me. Where was my friend? Didn't she think my dreams were important?

After what felt like forever, the presenter moved on. I was still alone. I didn't hear a word he said—I walked away and sat down on the grass, tears welling up in my eyes. After so many nearly sleepless nights, I couldn't deal with my own disappointment. A well of sadness overflowed from within me and spilled out.

I watched with a heavy heart as the fire tenders raked the bonfire's coals out to form a long path that glowed orange and red in the dark night. A line of people formed, dancing and singing, with lots of energy. My enthusiastic friend was among them, right in the front.

I shuffled to the end of the line. I still wanted to walk on the coals despite my low emotions. Walking on those hot coals became something I wanted to

prove to myself. I knew my heart was drenched in sadness, but I thought it wouldn't matter.

When it was my turn to walk over the coals, I walked faster than the people before me. The coals felt so hot that I nearly ran over them. When I was done, I examined my feet. My soles were blackened, and at least three fire blisters were throbbing with pain. I sat out the rest of the fire walk, watching as people walked over the hot coals several more times without getting any blisters at all. My enthusiastic friend went five or six times without burning herself once!

The next year, I went to the same fire festival, and was thrilled to see that the same people were putting on the fire walk. I resolved to try walking on hot coals again, but this time, I went to sleep earlier every night and arranged to pair up with a friend who wouldn't run away. Although my enthusiastic friend and I had made up, I just wanted to have the experience with someone else. When it was my turn to talk about my wildest hopes and dreams, I spoke honestly and from my heart. I talked about my lifelong dreams and biggest desires. As soon as the words left my mouth, I felt the power of the spoken word so clearly. It was as if I were giving my dreams life by acknowledging them out loud instead of in the recesses of my mind.

When it came time for everyone to line up before the burning coals, I was ecstatic. This time, I was part of the singing, dancing, laughing group. I felt at one with the people around me. We moved together as if we were part of one giant family. My energy was so high, and I felt blissfully happy, as if anything were possible.

Soon it was my turn to walk over the glowing magenta coals. I stepped forward and felt absolutely no heat whatsoever. Someone encouraged me to keep walking, but I wasn't in a rush. I danced my way over the long trail of hot coals, feeling such a different experience compared to the last time. Afterward, I examined my feet and couldn't find any trace of a blister. I went again and again—five times total— without getting burned once.

If you can take one thing away from my fire walk story, I hope it's that your emotions and state of mind matter greatly. The world is different when we experience it with different energy states. What would harm us in a lower energy state will bounce off of us when we're in a higher energetic state.

JOURNALING EXERCISE
NEW EMOTION, WHO'S THIS?

Have you ever experienced something during two very different emotional levels? For example, what's the difference between the feeling of a normal day in your life versus how the things felt when you graduated or achieved something magnificent? How do these two times feel different? Write about how your emotions gave you different options as far as what you had the ability to do.

Mental Energy

Our abilities to focus, study, direct energy, express ourselves, communicate, create boundaries, and make decisions all lie within the mental energy realms. Our thoughts are powerful and often create much of how we perceive the world. We need a certain amount of mental stimulation to thrive, including learning new things, problem-solving, conversing with others, creative projects, imagining, brainstorming, and entertainment. These activities all involve mental energy to one degree or another.

Also residing in the mental energy realm is the ego, or the guardian between ourselves and the rest of the world. The guardian is the presenting self, and it either engages with others or limits interactions, based on the internal and external energies at hand. It acts on our behalf as a parent figure, lawyer, friend, and advocate. A strong guardian will bat away negativity easily. It'll be able to work through challenges and stand up for us when we've been wronged. The guardian helps us ask for what we need. It's the part of us that maintains healthy boundaries and protects our hearts against cruelty. Empowered guardians protect us from unhealthy emotions and do everything in their power to preserve the self. But not everyone has that kind of an ally. Sometimes, the guardian is weak, disempowered, or insecure. In these cases, one of two things can happen.

The first type of insecure guardian shows up with narcissists or megalomaniacs, or when people are so egotistical that they have an inflated sense of themselves. These people think they can do no wrong, are overly concerned with themselves and their stature, and are unable to listen to others. It creates a stranglehold on freedom of expression. They usually have no spiritual energy within them because of the overbearing, overly watchful qualities of the guardian. This weak guardian needs to be dismantled through releasing of the

past and emotional healing. It's only through acknowledging their wounds and healing that they can truly connect with their own spiritual energy. To instate a healthy guardian, these people can focus on responding better to the energy presented, instead of responding in a pompous manner that makes them feel better about themselves.

The second type of insecure guardian creates a "weak empath," or someone who always feels drained of energy. These people are the other side of the coin. They're doormats. They live in their heads and act in others' best interests as opposed to their own. You might call them spiritual introverts. They're open to the universe yet shut off from the world because their weak guardian makes them feel overwhelmed and distrustful. This weak guardian isn't able to set firm boundaries or speak up for themselves unless they're pushed against the wall, and sometimes, not even then. As such, they don't feel strong enough to deflect negative people and situations, so they constantly run away from others to heal themselves from perceived negative encounters. These people's guardians need to be strengthened in order for them to speak up for what they want and need. They need to create healthy boundaries to restrict their intake of overwhelming stimuli and to filter what kinds of connections are received. Only then, with an empowered and capable guardian, can they feel safe to ground into their bodies and be more present.

If you're an empath, practice keeping your energy to yourself and not entertaining others' energies. Don't be too easily swayed by the world. Part of being a wise empath is to know that anywhere you go, you may get triggered. Having that expectation can help your guardian deal with troublesome events when they inevitably arise. It's also wise to practice maintaining medium-level energy, grounding, protection, and a closed-off energy to others.

EXERCISE

STRENGTHENING THE GUARDIAN

Is there a boundary you'd like to create in your life, or something you'd like to say to someone? For example, maybe you wish your friend wouldn't text you after midnight, or perhaps you'd like to talk with your boss about changing your work duties. It's probable that you haven't brought these topics of discussion up because you don't yet have the mental strength, or a strong guardian, to do this.

Fortunately, you can gain mental strength by practicing and creating new neural pathways. Practice asking for what you desire. Be direct. Even if your voice quivers, keep talking. The words may sound strange to you the first time you say them out loud, but with time, they will come more naturally. Ask for what you desire. Whatever happens, at least you'll have spoken your mind. The next time you have to ask for something similar, it will be easier to find the words.

Spiritual Energy

Spiritual energy is the highest and most transcendent energy available to us. This is the very tip of the witch's hat. We spend the least amount of time and energy there, but it's the most rewarding. This energy can be felt as an uplifting sensation in the heart, head, or aura. Activities related to spiritual energy include self-actualization, connection to the divine, a feeling of oneness with the universe, and spiritual practices such as ritual and mediation. Accessing spiritual energy and working with it is what most of this book is about.

Some spiritual experiences happen randomly, without our intentions, like a force of nature. These surprising events can be wonderful, but they don't happen often. We usually have to be in the right state of mind and body to even encounter these spiritual moments and see them for what they are. Spiritual energy can be accessed more easily when we take care of the demands from our bodies, emotions, and thoughts. In other words, to reach those mystical levels, we need to create a good foundation by taking care of our other life energy tasks (physical, emotional, and mental energy). When spiritual energy comes through, insights and realizations about the other energies can also come through. Negative energy can fall away more easily, and it's easier to attract more positive experiences. My second fire walk probably had some spiritual energy as well as emotional bliss.

EXERCISE
MEDITATION

Meditation is the art of being still in mind, emotions, and thoughts. Once these are calmed, the spirit can soar, gaining in energy. Start by taking a deep breath and focusing on the body. Acknowledge any discomfort, shift, and then resolve to still your body for the rest of the

practice. Move on to your emotions. Take a deep breath and scan your body. Where are you holding emotions? Release your hold on your emotions. Let that tight energy deflate and leave you. With another deep breath, listen to your mental chatter. Continue breathing deeply and focus on the present moment. Let your thoughts dissipate like clouds in the wind, as you focus on absolutely nothing. Once you feel that your physical, emotional, and mental energies are as still as they can be, connect with spiritual energy. With deep breaths, feel yourself filled with light coming to you from all directions. Let yourself become lighter with every breath. Feel the light lift your heart. Continue meditating for a couple of minutes or until you lose focus. Repeat this practice when you need to shed unwanted emotions or thoughts, and when you want to connect with spiritual energy.

A Holistic View of the Witch's Hat

I hope it's clear by now that having good energy in one sector can lay the groundwork for the others higher up in the pyramid. A good platform built of physical energy tasks (good food, rest, and exercise) combined with a good emotional energy level (feeling safe, content, and loved) can open the doors to good mental energy (feeling focused, with an unburdened mind) and spiritual energy (feeling lit up from within, radiant, connected, and whole).

If you're lacking in one area of energy, you can still have a spiritual experience, but your energy may not be grounded. In other words, your realization may not be fully integrated. That's why it's important to pay attention to how you're feeling energetically and to take care of yourself. All the maintenance you do will support you to have more powerful experiences. Taking care of the physical, emotional, and mental tasks and activities means we can spend more time accessing the spiritual energy realms.

Some people try to "transcend the mundane" and skip physical tasks (and sometimes the emotional ones too) in favor of spiritual insights. While time spent in spiritual moments are great, it's important to remember that your rent will still be due, your stomach will still growl, and your body will still need washing. In short time, the physical and emotional tasks and activities that need to happen will make themselves known. Trying to transcend the mundane is a great way to end up with no money, a bunch of pissed-off housemates, or

worse, homeless. Unless you're aiming to be an ascetic monk, it's wise to take care of the lower tasks and move forward in a state of balance.

The last thing I want to mention about the witch's hat is that we need to experience all four energetic frequencies in our lives to live fully. Having only three out of the four energies will leave us feeling incomplete, as if we have a hole in our hat that lets the rain in.

The energies of the witch's hat may seem simplistic, but they're the basis of all energy work, which is what witchcraft is all about. By mastering awareness of those subtle energies, we can advance our practice a lot easier when it comes time to raise energy, sense spirits and deities, and much more.

Energy Frequencies

The different types of energy that we experience can range in frequency, from low to high. In general, low energy feels rotten, and high energy feels uplifting, no matter if it's in the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual category. You could also think of the three states of energy as dim, medium, and bright frequencies. Use whichever analogy works for you. These energies don't always align in the same frequency and state, though. For example, someone merely going through the motions in life could have a high amount of physical energy, a low emotional state, a medium level of mental energy, and a low frequency of spiritual energy. We feel best when all our energies are in the middle to high ranges.

Middle Energy Ranges

Middle energy ranges are a good place to start, since most people experience the middle energy ranges of energy most of the time. This energy feels neutral and content—neither happy nor sad, neither bad nor great. It feels safe and not very challenging. Think of the middle-frequency energy as the common currency in the world. It's easier to do activities like going to the grocery store, driving a car, going to the bank, and going to work when we're in the middle ranges. That's because most of the energy in those establishments also exists in the middle ranges. It wouldn't suit us to have high emotional energy when we're testing avocados for firmness or to have low physical energy when buying stamps at the post office. Medium is the way to go.

When you go to a middle energy location, avoid anyone whose energy veers from the middle ranges. Low and high energies aren't appropriate at those places. Anyone who crossed those boundaries is likely to cross other boundaries as well. Whether it's intentional or not, it's definitely out of place.

Low Energy Ranges

Low energy states are a natural part of life. I hope you know that it's impossible to live in the middle to high frequencies all the time, and that's okay. Having low energetic frequencies from time to time is usually part of a cycle too. For example, everyone experiences low physical energy when we feel tired or overworked. Low emotional energy appears when we're grieving, when we feel over-socialized (for introverts), or when we feel under-socialized (for extroverts). Your mental energy can run low if you've used your brain too much. It can make you feel like you can't make a decision and can't concentrate. Low spiritual energy shows up after you perform a big ritual or if your other energies are low.

Having low energy in any of the realms is an indicator that you need a change. This could be sleep, rest, nourishing food, restorative self-care, relaxation, alone time, entertainment, or a good book. Recognize when you have low energy or when you're susceptible to it, like if you didn't sleep well or if you're hungry, sick, or have PMS. Whenever possible, practice self-soothing practices and self-care to get back to medium energy. Relaxation and emotional expression are important, especially if you're sick or need rest.

If you find you can't self-correct your low energy or if you find yourself doing nothing but watching shows for days on end, you may have a bigger problem. It's possible you're not facing reality and are struggling against the truth of a situation. Escapism can take our troubles away for a while, but when it's over, all our problems are there waiting for us. If your low-energy moments are present for prolonged periods of time, you may need to take a hard look at your life, specifically the things that bring you down. This could include consuming too much junk food or sugar, working in a toxic environment, or living in an unsafe place. It could also mean acknowledging that you're under stress or participating in a relationship that no longer serves you. A reprioritization of your energy allotments may be in order.

When you're in a low state, work to get yourself back to a middle energetic state. We've been conditioned by society to think that we should always feel happy, usually by the people who sell goods and services to get us to that state. The truth is that it's difficult to maintain high emotional states such as happiness. Being content and aiming for middle frequency emotions are better goals than attempting to reach the high-frequency energy of happiness all the time. Even doing one additional task or activity per day can make a huge difference. It can be scary to deal with problems that seem massive, but it's worth it. A little progress every day soon adds up to a more fully realized life. Your energy will likely soon be more readily available, and you'll be able to wield it better. Practice the Release the Bonds of the Past exercise in chapter 1 as often as needed. Having a better life is worth the trouble of doing the work. And if all else fails, seek professional assistance in the form of a therapist or doctor. They can help diagnose more serious problems.

High Energy Ranges

High energy is felt most often as the ability to do things. Physically, it's when we can work hard or perform well; emotionally, it's when we're incandescently happy or in love; mentally, it's when we're alert and focused and able to perform the mental task; and spiritually, it's when we're in an elevated state. Minute for minute, high energetic states don't occur as often as the time we spend in the middle energy ranges, but when they do, they can be wonderful, life-changing moments.

Higher energetic frequencies have the ability to affect people and the material world. At the Findhorn Garden in Scotland, gardeners who focused on radiating "love and appreciation to plants" were able to grow enormous heads of cabbage and broccoli.[10] Likewise, in a scientific study, water that was treated with supportive energy and an intention that it would aid in seedling growth created plants that were hardier and had a significant increase in nutrients compared to the control group.[11] The impacts of higher energetic frequencies were

10. Paul Hawken, *The Magic of Findhorn* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 116.

11. Y. J. Shiah, H. L. Hsieh, H. J. Chen, and D. I. Radin, "Effects of Intentionally Treated Water on Growth of Arabidopsis thaliana Seeds with Cryptochrome Mutations," *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing* 13, no. 6 (November 2007): 371–78, doi:10.1016/j.explore.2017.05.001.

also evident in a study that showed a marked improvement in the moods of the people who consumed food that had been blessed, compared to the moods of people who consumed food that had not been blessed.[12] In other words, the higher energetic states are where magical things happen more naturally.

Whenever you experience higher states, appreciate them—they don't always last long. It's wise to temper our expectations when it comes to these moments. If you always expect life to be in the higher levels, you will be sorely disappointed. We will always fall back into the medium and low energy levels whenever we run out of the ability to sustain the higher energy. One of the goals of this book is to take the knowledge of these energetic states and, whenever possible, cultivate higher energy moments that exist along with a stable, supportive life.

Putting It All Together

You could think of the three energetic frequencies as an open or closed hand. It's easier to receive gifts when your hand is open (middle energy) compared to when it's closed (low energy). It's even easier to receive a gift if you have your hand out with your muscles flexed in anticipation, as if you're expecting something magnificent and heavy (high energy).

As I touched upon earlier, our lives have a rhythm, with energy flowing in, getting used, and flowing out. We need lower energy cycles, like sleep, cuddling, and relaxation as much as we need the higher-energy parts of the cycle, like an intensely spiritual ritual. These energetic cycles are natural parts of life and should be honored. To get more in touch with yourself and your intuition, celebrate those different energy levels and be true to yourself when you feel them.

EXERCISE

THE ENERGY GRID

Scan yourself physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Notice where your energy levels are on a scale from low to high. Use the energy grid figure to assist you in categorizing your energy. Think about what brought you to these energetic levels. Consider keeping an energetic

12. D. Radin, G. Hayssen, and J. Walsh, "Effects of Intentionally Enhanced Chocolate on Mood," *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing* 3, no. 5 (September 2007): 485–92, doi:10.1016/j.explore.2007.06.004.

journal for a week or a moon cycle. Write down what level of energy you feel every day and what activities you participated in prior to that feeling. This will assist you in getting in touch with your actual feelings and will sharpen your energy awareness.

	Low	Medium	High
Physical			
Emotional			
Mental			
Spiritual			

Figure 2: The Energy Grid

Chakras

It's nearly impossible to talk about subtle energy and the body without mentioning chakras. The Sanskrit word *chakra* translates to "wheel" and likely originated in early Hinduism or Buddhism. Chakras, or energy centers, are thought to be located along our spine, neck, and head, from the bottom tailbone vertebrae to the very top of our skull.

Over the years during my healings for myself and others, I've noticed that energy gets stuck in various chakras. It's worth examining what a functional and dysfunctional chakra looks like. A brief overview of the chakras will be presented here for the purposes of understanding their basic energy and their associated emotions. Interestingly, the qualities and levels mirror those of the witch's hat.

The red root chakra, at the base of the spine, is concerned with primal and physical needs like survival. It's the major physical energy chakra. Someone with a clogged root chakra may be closed-off, fearful, angry, or ungrounded. When it's functioning properly, people feel powerful, able, safe, healthy, and strong.

The second chakra, located in the genital region, is orange and deals with creativity and sexuality. When stuck, it's associated with creative blocks, feelings of unworthiness, shame, displeasure in life, and either a denial of sexuality or a voracious appetite for sex. When empowered, this chakra shows up as a healthy desire to interact with others, feelings of creativity, a healthy sexual desire, and the ability to receive and give pleasure.

The third chakra is also known as the solar plexus, and it sits at the navel. It rules over matters of personal power. Its color is yellow, and when functioning well, it deals with issues of personal empowerment, confidence, and joy. The low-energy spectrum of this chakra includes emotions such as disempowerment, anxiety, depression, and insecurity.

The fourth chakra is the heart chakra, which is the color green. Love rules this area. It's the dominant seat of emotional energy. Its empowered aspects include the feelings of friendship, romantic love, self-love, unconditional love, compassion, forgiveness, trust, and freedom. A closed heart chakra might manifest in feelings of unlovability, heartache, self-hatred, and hatred for others, grief, guilt, paranoia, mistrust, and codependency. People with heart chakra problems will seem heartbroken and sad.

The fifth chakra is located at the throat and is a deep blue. Communication is its main function. When imbued with good energy, it can be expressive, eloquent, and creative on a communicative level. When shut down, it'll show up in feelings of not being able to speak one's truth, an inability to express one's creativity, talking too much or too little, and an inability to listen to and hear other people.

The sixth chakra is known as the third eye and is indigo or purplish blue. It deals with insight and mental activity. When in a good state, it's intuitive, insightful, clear-seeing, serene, imaginative, and possibly even psychic. When it's in a poor state, it reflects as an inability to see a situation clearly, a lack of foresight and intuition, an inability to make a decision, a disconnection with spiritual energy, and a concentration on physical and emotional energy states only.

The seventh chakra rests at the crown of the head and is the ultimate connection with spirituality and spiritual energy. Colors associated with it are violet, white, and gold. When empowered, one receives insights and feels transcendent, blissful, and connected to the divine. If it's closed down, it shows up as depression, a willful separation from spirituality, and frustration with life.

Someone with a corrupted crown chakra may appear as though they have a brain injury, as if they have a limited ability to process.

All chakras are important for full realization of one's power and for intuitive witchcraft. Although some are placed lower in the body, they shouldn't be considered "beneath us" or "lower energy." No one chakra is more important than another.

A good regular practice is to bring consciousness to where your chakras are in your body and how they feel. They should feel like glowing or spinning embers of light along the spine. If any chakras seem out of place or sluggish, realign the chakras by breathing deeply and imagining that you're drawing them toward the spine.

This is where the concept of energetic chakra alignment can be insightful. All the energetic states discussed in this chapter have their own natural alignments. Your alignment when you have low energy feels vastly different compared to your medium-level alignment, which feels supremely different from when you have high frequencies of energy. By becoming more aware of your energy, your chakras, and your alignment, you can make changes when you want to embody something better or when you need to relax. If you're inclined toward studying chakras more, pursue further research from a good source.

Seeing and Cleansing Your Energetic Field

The ability to see auras, or our body's energetic fields, comes naturally to some people. For others, it's a lesson that may take years to learn, if it's possible at all. It's easiest to learn how to see them with another person who is not closed off, energetically speaking. Although you could try to see auras anytime and anywhere, trying to see auras is a great exercise for friends who trust one another.

If you're first learning how to see auras, go somewhere with a friend where you won't be bothered. Try going outside, or find a background wall that's neutral in color, such as white or gray. Any sunlight or electric lights should be of medium brightness—not so bright that it blinds you, and not so dim that you lose sight of their features. Move around the person or tilt your head until the light isn't shining into your eyes and is only shining on the other person. Have one person talk about something they're passionate about, no matter if it's spirituality or soccer. They should try to be as open and honest as possible.

The second person will try to see the aura by softening their gaze and taking deep breaths. They should look at the area just beyond the talking person's head. They may see a thin layer of energy that radiates out in tiny heat waves. It probably has a certain colored hue, which may appear to be a pastel color. Once the seer sees a little bit of the aura, it's likely that they'll be able to see more once they shift their gaze to view the person's neck and shoulders. By letting your eyes soften even more, you may see a broader aura. The color and thickness of the aura will vary depending on the frequency of energies at hand. Generally speaking, people with the brightest auras have the highest frequencies of spiritual energy.

If you don't see anything after a few minutes, experiment with standing closer or farther away from the person, adjusting the light, or removing your glasses, if you wear them. If the aura goes away, or the seeing person gets tired of trying to see the aura, switch roles. Try seeing auras with different people and in different settings. Your methods of seeing auras may differ, so find whatever works for you.

With time, you may also be able to see energetic blockages in auras. Blocked chakras and unnaturally low energetic states aren't good, and auras reflect these blockages and problems. They appear cloudy and the energy will feel gross, as if someone has gone without bathing for a long time. Auras not only reflect our own joys and problems, but they can also pick up on the energies of other people and places, like a sponge. If auras aren't cleansed regularly, they can get extremely dirty.

Fortunately, we may have the ability to cleanse our energetic fields by moving the energy. Here's a short list of ways to cleanse your aura. You may recognize some of these from the Wild Expressions subsection in the previous chapter.

- ★ Exercise.
- ★ Practice good posture.
- ★ Intuitive movement, or letting the body express itself freely.
- ★ Have a ritual.
- ★ Burn incense, resins, or herbs.
- ★ Express your truth out loud.
- ★ Experience pleasure or joy.

- ★ Cry.
- ★ Do intuitive vocal work, letting intuitive sounds emanate from the body.
- ★ Meditate.
- ★ Do yoga.
- ★ Practice self-care.
- ★ Dance.
- ★ Spending time in nature or with animals.
- ★ Spend time with loved ones.
- ★ Talk with a licensed therapist.
- ★ Deal with the problems causing the blockages.

There are several other therapeutic remedies that work. You'll probably notice that many of these have some form of movement in common. That's because any kind of movement can release stagnant energy. If you're feeling stuck, try to intuitively feel what needs to be moved and the way in which it can be released. Each one of your problems has its own unique solution. What works for one problem won't be the solution for another. If you're feeling stuck, start going down the list or ask your aura how it wants to be cleansed.

The most important message is that there are things you can do to heal your blocked energy and create more space for all your different life energies (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual) to rise in frequency. This will make you more empowered and will increase your ability to stir up higher spiritual energy. Because raising energy is an integral part of magic, be sure that you understand these concepts before moving on.

EXERCISE

CHAKRA SCAN

Sit up straight or lie in a comfortable position. Breathe from your diaphragm and energetically scan your body along your spine, neck, and head. Evaluate each of your chakras. Do any feel sluggish or stuck? If so, choose one of the methods to cleanse your energy field and try to get the energy flowing again. After your energy feels better, hold that good vibration in place for a few deep, slow breaths. Evaluate what caused your sluggish or blocked energy.

Truly Feeling Your Own Energy

By now, you know you have energy, you know there are different states and levels of frequency of it, and you're aware that you can change an energetic frequency. Paying attention to your energy is a witch's best self-care guide. When we radiate the energy we prefer, we're more likely to receive the same energy in kind. Check in with yourself and really feel your energy, your body, and its reactions. Self-care is a great practice, but it's far smarter to craft your life so that you don't need as much self-care. Ultimately, that's the goal of energy awareness—acknowledging the truth of every situation according to our intuitions and choosing how we want to respond.

Now that you're more whole and healed, you're ready for the next step. This next chapter is where the real magic begins, as you alter your existing energies and, through witchcraft, change the world to be closer to your deepest desires.

Further Reading List

Aron, Elaine N. *The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You*. New York: Citadel Press, 1997.

Roth, Gabrielle. *Maps to Ecstasy: A Healing Journey for the Untamed Spirit*. Novato, CA: Nataraj Publishing, 1998.

Chapter 3

Basic Intuitive Witchcraft

The third tenet of intuitive witchcraft is you are magic: you have the ability to modify your energy and the energies around you through willpower. Magic could also be defined as the study and art of aligning our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energies; tapping into the energies that exist outside of us; raising them together in frequency; and merging them with our desires. The result is more than the sum of its parts, as pure, transcendent magic that transforms us and the world. It puts us in touch with a larger reality than we were aware of before.

Some witches never go beyond merely thinking about this, though. They've learned to attune their bodies to higher frequencies and to radiate their desired energy. With that beginner type of magic, they can attract what they want and repel what they don't want. This is a kind of "low-maintenance" magic in that a minimal effort is exerted and good things happen. For some people, that's good enough, and if you want to stay there, that's fine. However, with low-maintenance magic, there's a danger of slipping into a habit of doing nothing and losing one's energy awareness and magic altogether. The beginner magic in the first two chapters of this book is simply that—beginner magic. It's limited in scope. There's only so much you can do with it. Doing beginner magic is sort of like working your first job. Everyone needs to start somewhere, but not everyone wants to stay there forever. You may want to develop more skills, encounter the mysteries, and wield the larger amounts of energy it takes to make big changes in your life.

There's a common saying among my friends: *witches practice witchcraft.* Without the actual crafting part of it, we'd be nothing more than energetically aware people, wandering through the wild woods and reacting to whatever we encounter. We'd be practicing *wishcraft*, or positive thinking and being, as opposed to witchcraft. Why not step up your game and see what this truly magical life is all about? What do you have to lose, except time? On the other hand, the possibilities of what you have to gain are magnificent.

The good news is that it's easy to take these next steps. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework for you to build the bones of your magical intuitive practice based on intuition and energy awareness. You'll find basic information about how to choose tools, cleanse magical objects, cast a circle, find or create the perfect spell, and how to perform a basic ritual involving willpower. If you're just beginning your foray into the enchanted forest of intuitive witchcraft, this chapter will be especially important. Many of these concepts will be built upon with more advanced concepts in the following chapters.

Which Witch Tools?

Witch tools are physical objects that help you perform magical works, but they're much more than just objects. You could think of them as the conduits for you to direct your energy. Or perhaps you prefer to think of them as physical items that embody your emotional, mental, and spiritual energies. Most people use magical tools because they help them visualize energy and direct it. Whenever we perform magic, we're externalizing our energy and combining it with other energies. While you don't necessarily need physical representations for your magic, working with them can help you "see" what's happening.

This section contains the most commonly used witch tools and their purposes. Experiment. If they resonate with you and they're useful, use them. If they're not helping or don't feel like "you," don't use them. These witch tools are not a complete list; rather, they could be considered a starter guide.

Athame

An athame is a sacred knife used to cast a circle and perform energetic cuttings. Traditionally, it's a double-sided blade with a black handle and is associated with masculine energy. However, with intuitive witchcraft, nearly any kind of blade can be used as an athame, and no gender has to be associated with it.

If you want to work with a traditional athame, shop at metaphysical stores. Test out the different lengths, handles, and materials available to find one that fits your style. If you don't find anything that suits your fancy, search online to view the several different types of athames available for purchase. Are you cautious about spending money? Experiment with a letter opener, a kitchen knife, a crochet needle, or any other metal tool. If you don't resonate with metal, look into other options, including those made of glass, bone, mineral, stone, crystal, and more. If you're creative, you could try to make one from wood, clay, or resin. Find whatever resonates with you.

When you use an athame, feel energy moving down your arm, into the athame, and out, as if it were an extension of yourself. When using it to cut a circle away from the mundane world, imagine the blade cutting through the fabric of reality to create a sacred, unattached space between the worlds.

Bell

Ringing a bell can clear away negative energy and shift the frequency of a ritual space toward your intended focus. You can use anything that produces a resonant sound when struck, such as a bell, chime, cymbals, or a tonal bowl, such as a Himalayan or Tibetan singing bowl. As the bell rings out, imagine the vibrations and sound clearing the space energetically.

I prefer to ring a bell before a ritual to cleanse the space, again after casting a circle to set the mood and focus, and again after any particularly heavy ritual work. This lightens the mood and denotes a shift to the next part of the ritual. I also ring it after I've opened the circle to clear any remaining energy. Ringing a bell can also be effective in group rituals to cut chatter and focus attention.

Experiment with different bells, chimes, cymbals, and bowls to find one that produces the right tone for your magical workings. Use a bell with a pleasant, uplifting sound if you wish to perform magic for the highest good. You may also want to consider having more than one bell. A high-pitched one is good for higher vibrational work and rituals involving spiritual energy, such as manifestation, while a deep, resonant sounding bell is perfect for lower vibrational work, such as physical or emotional work. A high-pitched bell with a pleasant note can also be used to call to nature spirits or the fae. If you're working baneful or chaos magic, bells with sour notes can create the perfect dissonant condition.

Book of Shadows

I recommend using a book of shadows as a tool to record all of your magical works. It's helpful to look back and figure out what worked and what didn't work. Ideally, you'll list several details about your ritual, such as the date, time, your intentions, goals, methods, the deities or spirits invoked, the deities or spirits who showed up, offerings, herbs, spells, the divination used and the result, the oils used, and any other relevant details, such as the moon phase or solar position (i.e., full moon in Aquarius or autumn equinox).

If you don't already have a book of shadows, you could consider intuitively choosing the right book for an amusing exercise. Ideally, you'll feel drawn to the look and feel of the book and want to write in it. Consider your book of shadows to be a touchstone where you record your magical deeds, dreams, and tarot readings. Your book doesn't have to be fancy, and you can certainly print out information from the internet and include them.

Your entries may be loose at first. Don't worry. They will develop as your practice does. Leave room at the bottom of every page in case you want to write additional notes about the results. An inch or so of space should do. There are no rules when it comes to this book. It only has to be yours, for you to use at any time, to explore your spiritual path.

Broom

A broom can be used to cleanse a ritual space both physically and energetically before ritual. It can also be used to stir up energy during ritual. A broom used for sacred purposes is sometimes called a *besom*. Consider purchasing a well-crafted broom and adding special touches to it, such as flowers, ribbons, bells, and charms. It doesn't have to be fully functional at sweeping away debris. It only has to sweep energy. You can also make your own or find something broom-like that works for the same purposes. For instance, my favorite "broom" is a small pine bough I found on a walk one day.

Cauldron

A cauldron is a bulbous metal bowl, sometimes with legs, handles, and lids. Cauldrons come in all sizes and can be used for many different magical acts. In ritual, they're especially useful as a vessel for magic and spells. If you like

to cook potions, a cauldron would be the perfect vessel. Cauldrons can also safely contain burning objects, whether that's a candle, incense, scraps of paper, herbs, or essential oils. If heating and burning things isn't your idea of a good time, you could add water to it, and the cauldron could double as a reflective surface for scrying—more on that in chapter 11. If you're ever going to consume anything from that cauldron, make sure the ingredients you use in your cauldron are food-safe and are not poisonous. Many cauldrons are porous and even after a hardcore washing, could still leach poison.

Chalice

The chalice is a goblet, glass, or cup used to represent the element of water in ritual. Traditionally, it's associated with feminine energy, but as I indicated earlier with the athame, this is open to your interpretation. The chalice is usually filled with wine or juice. It is the perfect witch tool to toast the gods, to give beverage offerings to them, and to use when charging liquid with an intention or energy, especially if you want to imbibe it.

Candles

Candles have a long tradition of being used in magic. A dancing flame creates a sense of wonder unlike anything else. Choose candles for magical works based on their energy, size, color, and scent (or lack thereof). For example, when I want to communicate better, I choose a big, blue candle. It's the color of the throat chakra, and it also feels right for me. Conversely, if I want to release something, such as negativity, I choose a small candle in a color I associate with whatever I wish to release. I meditate with it and watch it get smaller with the light of my consciousness, eventually extinguishing. (For more information about color correspondences, see chapter 4.)

The best candles come from places that have good intentions. It's worth spending a little extra money on a candle that has the perfect energy. If you need a boost of energy, purchase a candle from a metaphysical shop that was designed for your specific needs. Some of these were poured at special astrological times, may contain essences of corresponding herbs. They may also have been blessed for that specific purpose.

Statues and Images

Good art is one of my favorite witch tools. There's a reason all the pagan idols were banned by the early Christians—since ancient times, statues and images have created powerful connections with the gods and are handy for all kinds of magical uses. Whether you're using a statue of Yemaya, an image of Athena on dining ware, a piece of fabric with a colorful mandala, or a print of an image that reminds you of your higher self, statues and images can help you channel these deities and bring out those qualities in yourself. Search online for a wide variety of different products. Choose images or statues that feel alive to you. If you don't like what's offered, create your own.

Wand

A wand is a slender shaft of wood used to represent the element of air. It's used to summon spirits after a circle has been cast and can also be used to raise energy by stirring it up. It can be made of many different materials, but traditionally, it's made of wood. The wand can be raw wood with the bark intact (i.e., a stick) or polished until it's smooth. If the idea of a wooden wand doesn't resonate with you, you could use a crystal such as selenite, if you wish. Use whatever feels right for you.

Altar

Altars are the perfect places to house your witch tools. They're also great places for storing spiritual energy, like a battery or a bank. The energy you raise in ritual can be stored there and used at a later time.

It's not necessary to have more than one altar, but having more than one can really expand your practice. At the time of writing this book, I have eleven altars scattered throughout my house for many different purposes. I use four elemental altars and a center altar that represents spirit for the majority of my work. The other altars are for home and hearth, the fae, my ancestors and beloved dead, my creative projects, one for a deity who doesn't play well with others, and another to a deity that doesn't fit my magical works, but whom I still honor.

All kinds of things can be added to altars. Ideally, anything you add will be evocative of the energy you wish to house there. Items to place on altars can include candles, stones, statues, art, jewelry, ribbons, natural objects such as

pine cones, flowers, a jar of dirt from your backyard, a pentacle, or any other spiritual symbol, such as the moon. Don't stop there. Add anything that your intuition tells you to use.

Use an altar cloth to set the space apart from a normal counter or dresser top. This also helps hide anything below it. If you can sew, go to the fabric store, select some special cloth, and sew it into a square or rectangle to truly make it your own. Velvet is especially nice for altar cloths, but there are several other fabrics and colorful prints available as well. If your altar cloth is especially big, you can cover your altar at a moment's notice when, say, someone has to enter your home to fix the plumbing.

Evaluate what altars you already have set up in your home. Anything that is on display could be considered an altar, from the pictures on the wall to the candles on the mantle. How do you feel when you look at these objects? If these altars remind you of happy times or evoke your higher consciousness, keep them. If not, think about the emotions they evoke. Are they helpful to you in any way, or do they remind you of a painful time or someone who doesn't have your best interests at heart? Rather than keeping those strange items and putting them on display, you might want to store them instead. Or you could donate anything you don't love to a charitable organization or to someone who could truly appreciate them.

Tarot Cards and Runes

Tarot cards and runes are ancient divinatory tools that can be used in everyday practice or in ritual. Tarot cards are a collection of drawings of archetypes in the major arcana and a life lesson played out in four suits in the minor arcana. It is thought to have originated from the fourteenth century in Europe.

Runes are Germanic letters with meanings, and their use may go all the way back to the Iron Age. They are carved or printed onto bone, wood, metal, ceramic tiles, clay, stone, and other materials. Most metaphysical shops seem to have these, but if you're looking for something in particular, like runes from a Nordic source, check online. You should feel drawn to the cards or set of runes. The art or material should resonate with you. I also advise you to read the booklet that comes with them to make sure you feel the meanings are sufficient for your work. Intuitive tarot and runes will be covered in chapter 11, in

Looking into the Void, as well as other divination tools, such as scrying, using a pendulum, and book divination.

Other Witch Tools

There are several other witch tools you could use, including a dedicated incense burner, tongs for holding a burning object such as a bay leaf, a candle snuffer, a pentacle disk (representing earth), special candle holders, and more. As always with intuitive witchcraft, use what works.

Even though witch tools are great, the most effective and important tool you'll ever use is your belief in yourself. When we believe we're worthy of love, wealth, health, and whatever else we desire, we'll attract those things to us. This is evident in the highly effective placebo effect, which illustrates how a belief that something works becomes an actual reality—physically, emotionally, and mentally.[13] Of course, there are some limitations, and we can't transcend all of life's problems this way. But our belief about our situations usually determines how well we can face our hardships. Whenever possible, we need to believe in ourselves not only through our mental energy, but throughout all the other energy realms as well.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

The Underrated Power of Imagination

Mat Auryn

As you begin down the path of magical, psychic, and spiritual endeavors, it's very likely that someone will start thinking or saying that it's all in your head and that it's all imaginary—perhaps even yourself. They're absolutely correct. Magic is imaginary; psychic ability is imaginary; even your perception of the gods and spirits are imaginary. Imagination is the image-creating faculty of the mind. This ability to create something from nothing within our minds is nothing less than the power of creation itself, like matter arising from the void of nonexistence. Just because something is imaginary does not mean that it isn't real or extremely potent.

13. Faith Brynie, "The Placebo Effect: How It Works," *Psychology Today*, January 10, 2012, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/brain-sense/201201/the-placebo-effect-how-it-works.

If you don't believe the power that imagination holds over each and every one of us, take a moment to think about all the concepts that already hold power over us. Concepts are nothing more than conceived thoughts within one's mind that often hold great influence because they're held as being true. Political ideology, morality, psychology, concepts of self-identity, emotional states, dreams, goals, fears, and so forth are all examples of things that are also "imaginary" and conceptual, yet they are regarded as real. You cannot hold them, weigh them, or see them. Yet when accepted as being true and real, they have a massive impact on physical reality.

As witches, we work with the nonphysical realms, weaving together the outer and inner worlds with our willpower to create palpable physical changes. The manner in which we project our willpower into the nonphysical realms and the means by which we perceive them is through the imagination. The ability for humanity to form and hold images and concepts within the mind is one of the greatest keys we have for psychic and magical ability. The brainwave state that is most connected with psychic perception, healing abilities, and magical ability is the alpha brainwave state, which is the exact same brainwave state used when the imagination is being engaged.

Mystics, occultists, and witches throughout history have stressed the importance of the imagination when it comes to the magical arts. Yet in our postindustrial age in which "seeing is believing," the imaginary faculties of the mind are dismissed and brushed aside as being unreal and, as such, unimportant. While discernment is crucial to ensuring that you don't go off the rails in self-delusion, a witch should befriend their imagination and use it to their advantage. Imagination backed by solid willpower is one of the greatest tools at our disposal for the ability to shape, mold, and perceive ourselves and our world. Magic may indeed be "all in our head," but that doesn't invalidate its reality or effectiveness in creating results.

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Cleansing Magical Objects

Before you use any objects for magical purposes, they should be cleansed of their former energy. Energetic residue can stick to objects, which can affect our magical workings. Not everything will need to be cleansed—for example, if I harvest some mint leaves from my garden, I don't have to clean them because I'm certain the energy is fine. On the other hand, if you purchase a book of

shadows from a bookstore, you'll want to cleanse all the energy away from it before using it.

The goal of cleansing is to remove the old energy and make it more neutral. Use your intuition and common sense to discern the best method to cleanse your new magical objects. Here are my favorite ways to cleanse objects so that they can be used for ritual or energy work.

Water

Water is an excellent cleansing element because it's a good solvent for most materials. One of the best methods for cleansing with water is the use of natural waters. These include spring water, river water, rainwater, lake water, and ocean water. You can rinse or immerse objects in natural water and cleanse them of their former energies. Be cautious that there isn't contamination in the water. For example, it's best not to use lake water that has algal blooms or stream water that contains effluent from a factory.

If an item is greasy, is made of leather, or has been touched by a lot of people, it's probably covered in oils and fingerprints. Soap and water is a great way to remove grimy energy, and it's even more powerful than water alone. Nothing else comes close to the power of a strong, natural soap. I sometimes wash my crystals in soap and water to remove grease from them. This is also my preferred method when I obtain a new statue. A few minutes with liquid soap, an old toothbrush, and my kitchen sink can transform a statue from a mass-made piece of art into something that feels fresher.

You can also cleanse items with a plant-infused water like rosewater. These kinds of waters can be bought at specialty stores or online, or you can make your own. Floral water or herbal water can be made by boiling a pot of distilled water, removing it from heat, and adding fresh or dried flowers or herbs in it. Let it soak for about an hour with the lid on. When the water has completely cooled, strain it and pour it into a spray bottle or a labeled jar. To make it extra fragrant, add a few drops of essential oil. These waters make lovely solutions for cleansing the air and can also cleanse other objects. If you used an item that contains natural sugars or oils, such as fruit or nuts, use the water relatively quickly so it doesn't turn rancid. If it's more than a week old, give it a quick sniff before you use it.

Moonwater is another great water cleanser, especially if you want to both cleanse *and* charge an item. To make moonwater, fill a clear glass container like a water pitcher with clean water, and set it outside in the light of the full moon. Cover it with a lid or a glass plate to keep insects and rain out. Many witches prefer to leave moonwater out all night and take it inside when they awaken in the morning. That helps get the greatest amount of moonlight, but a shorter amount of time will also work. If you're concerned about freezing temperatures or if you can't leave your moonwater outside, set the container on the windowsill to absorb the light.

Cleansing with water isn't the best method for all your witch tools. It can dissolve softer stones such as angelite and selenite. Water can also corrode some metals. Immersion in water also isn't a great cleansing method for items like books, but washing book covers with a damp cloth will cleanse most of the energy from them.

Salt

Salt is one of my favorite methods of cleaning because of its properties. It kills bacteria, neutralizes energy, is an energetic conductor, and absorbs moisture and energy from the air. Salt baths are so popular because they're effective at cleansing and recharging people's energy. It's the same reason why people love beaches so much.

Salt is one of the best ways to cleanse crystals because it's dry and nonintrusive. To do so, set the crystals in a dish of salt, or sprinkle some salt over them. Some people like to leave a dish of salt out in their homes, or sprinkle salt in the corners of their rooms to neutralize energy. You can also sprinkle salt on windowsills and over doorways to keep good energy in and bad energy out.

If you want to cleanse with salt, be careful that the item won't corrode. Salt doesn't work well with metals, as it can make them rust. Don't use salt to cleanse mirrors and other smooth surfaces, as they can be scratched. If you're using saltwater to cleanse, take the same precautions as you do with water, and be aware that once saltwater dries, it could leave behind a layer of salt crystals. Be extra cautious of using salt if you have animals that may come into contact with it. To be cautious about their sensitive systems, only use it in places where they won't encounter it.

Fire

Fire and flames can be used to cleanse as well. This elemental type of cleansing can burn away remaining energy on objects. It's visually appealing and can strike a chord if you need to transform the energy of an object. It's not recommended for flammable objects such as paper or books. Fire cleansing works well for metallic objects, especially after washing them with soap and water. Use extreme caution, as an object cleansed with fire may be extremely hot to the touch. When in doubt, don't touch it until you're certain it has cooled completely.

To cleanse with fire, light a candle and pass the item over the flame quickly, being careful to not let it get too hot. You might want to use tongs or an oven mitt to protect yourself from the heat. Swipe it over the fire a few more times or until the energy feels different.

Incense or Smoke of Burning Herbs, Wood, and Resins

Burning plant material as incense is an ancient practice that cleanses the air and every object the smoke encounters. All manner of dried plants and herbs can be burned, including rosemary, lavender, sage, thyme, bay, catnip, mint, pine, and so on. Resins such as copal, myrrh, frankincense, and many others have been used for this purpose for millennia. Burning wood chips or sticks such as cypress, pine, sandalwood, or palo santo also has a cleansing effect.

To burn large pieces of herbs and wood, light a little bit of the item on fire, let it burn for a few seconds, blow it out, and quickly transfer it to a heatproof bowl or a cauldron. You may want to use tongs when you light it. Once the item is in the bowl or cauldron, waft your hand over it or blow lightly on the embers to keep them burning. Waft the smoke over the object to be cleansed, being sure to cover it completely.

Burning smaller pieces of herbs, wood, and resins requires the use of incense charcoal, or a small disk that can be lit and will burn for about thirty minutes. The smoke is usually mild and can be used for cleansing most objects. Look for incense charcoal in your local specialty store or purchase it online.

Incense and smoke are my favorite methods for cleansing tarot cards, books, and the air. Take the necessary precautions when dealing with flames, burning objects, and charcoal, and always practice fire safety.

Earth

There are times when an earth cleansing is the only method that will remove stubborn energy from an object. Once, I obtained a beautiful bronze statue of the goddess Gaia, but the energy didn't quite feel right. I'm not sure if there was lingering energy from the previous owner, or if I just didn't love her personification. My intuition told me to put her in my garden, so I did. For over a month, she was in contact with the earth, getting rained on, and hanging out with my tomato plants. Several weeks later, when the energy of the statue felt different, she was finally ready to come into my home.

To cleanse with earth, you can either bury objects in the earth or put them in direct contact with it. If you are concerned about leaving something outside or don't have the ability to leave anything outside in earth, place it in a potted plant. Ideally, the object will stay in contact with the dirt until the energy feels different.

Be cautious to only place things outside if they're in a safe area where they won't come into contact with a lawn mower. If the item may be toxic, such as an epoxy wand, place it somewhere an animal won't encounter it and try to eat it, such as in the earth and under a pot. Also, be aware that some metals may corrode if buried or left outside. Only use earth cleansing on objects that can get wet and dirty.

Air, Sunlight, and Moonlight

Leaving an item outside to be exposed to the air, sun, and moon is a good way to cleanse. This kind of cleaning decompresses any remaining energy on the item and creates an atmospheric shift that makes it more receptive to new energy. I use this method often, especially with items I buy from a thrift store that can be left outside for a while. I have a small table by my back door where I leave objects, often before they make it into my home. They sit there like patient guardians as the elements work on cleansing them. If you don't have a good place to keep things outside to be exposed to air, sun, and the moon, a windowsill inside your home can work.

Some crystals and stones can be harmed by sunlight. Do your research to make sure you don't harm them. Alternately, you might want to cleanse an object by sunlight only or moonlight only, in accordance with the energy of

the object. Keep an eye on the weather and times of sunrise and moonrise and plan accordingly. Also be aware that the object will likely get a rainwater cleansing as well, or at least dew. Be sure the item can come into contact with water before you leave it outside.

Sound

All kinds of sound can be used to cleanse, including your voice, music, metal bowls, bells, and chimes. Sonic vibrations can change the frequency of the item by knocking away any loose energy. This method is safe for most, if not all, objects.

Breath

One of my favorite ways to cleanse items is to blow lightly on them. This is a particularly good way to give an item a freshen-up to your current energy as opposed to a deep cleanse. Breath cleansings remove old energy and change the energy of any object. Best of all, it makes them more resonant to your energy. It's my favorite method for cleansing items that I regularly work with, such as tarot cards and crystals. To cleanse by breath, take a deep breath and blow lightly on the object. Turn the object as you blow, so that you get all sides and edges. Imagine that any energy remaining on the item is pushed off by your breath. This method is safe for most objects.

Consecrating Magical Tools

After cleansing an object for magical works, you'll want to consecrate it, or put your intentions into it. To consecrate an item, state your objectives for using it and give it some kind of special attention. This could mean anointing it with oil, meditating with it, asking for a blessing of the object by a deity or spirits, or holding the object in your auric presence and imbuing it with your will.

After an item has been consecrated for magical use, only use the object as intended. For example, don't open letters with an athame you consecrated to cut through the energetic realms. It'll dull the energy, and it could distract you during ritual. You don't want to be thinking about your electric bill when you're trying to cut a circle between the worlds. After consecration, it becomes a special tool only and should be treated with respect.

Ritual Preparation: Grounding and Centering

Before you perform magical rites, cleanse yourself and your space to help you to prepare mentally. When I'm in a clean space, it helps me focus on the present moment and the matter at hand. Science backs this up—studies show that people feel less agitated in a clean space, and also when they themselves are cleaner. Physical cleaning is also a great way to get rid of any energy that has accumulated since the last time you cleaned. History recommends cleansing too—the ancient Greeks were obsessed with inner and outer purity, and they performed several cleansings every day, especially before rituals. They believed that "without purification, there is no access to the sacred."[14]

There's no specific order to the multitude of things that can be cleaned in your home, but I've developed my own ideal preference that I use before big rituals. First, I cleanse any new tools or items to be used in ritual (such as candles), then I clean and declutter the ritual space. Next, I move my body to help get my energies flowing and to help me transition away from mundane life. This could take the form of a run, a walk, gardening, dancing, or a little yoga. Afterward, I take a bath or a shower and use bath salts or a soap with fragrant essential oils. Just before ritual, I cleanse my space with burning herbs, resin, or incense, and anoint myself with oils that resonate with my ritual. I light candles, put music on, and adjust the lights to set the tone. Last, I cleanse my thoughts by meditating or spending some quiet time. I center myself, align, and then ground and elevate my energy.

This may seem like a lot, but it can all be accomplished in a relatively short period of time. It really helps open me up before a ritual. I don't always do everything in this list—I let my intuition and time constraints guide me. Follow your inner voice to do whatever you need to do to feel fresh and ready for deep work. Ideally, you will feel as good as you can before performing magic and to have a ritual space where truly magical things can happen.

Whether or Not to Cast a Circle

Some witches always cast circles, and others never do. Many decide whether or not they should cast one depending on the kind of magical work performed.

14. Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 19.

I'm of the latter group. Sometimes, with big magic, it just feels right. Other times, the magic I'm about to do is so small that casting a circle seems superfluous. This is the case for smaller magics such as divination, cleansing, ecstatic dancing, or doing a bit of kitchen witchery. Although the concept of a magical circle may be strange or might feel too ceremonial for some people, casting a circle has a few benefits you should consider.

Magical Mindset

The first reason you might want to cast a circle is to get in the right mindset. A well-constructed circle feels different from the rest of the world because it creates a boundary between this world and the otherworlds. It can make you feel more magical and truly between the worlds. There's nothing like the formality of casting a circle to put you in the mindset for performing magical work. Going through the motions of casting a circle reinforces neural pathways and helps you get into the right brain space.

Magical Vessel

Another good reason for casting a circle is because it acts as a vessel or container for the energy. This is what's meant by "holding space" for your emotions. You can express your emotions in the circle without fear of them spilling out into anything outside of it.

If your work is powerful and will be directed somewhere, use the intention of a circle as the barrier for the energy. Once the energy is raised in vibration, it can be swirled into a spiraling cone. Like a bonfire, a cone formation builds in intensity faster than any other shape. When the energy reaches a peak, you can easily direct it with a wand, your hands, one last push of energy from your body, or a combination of all three.

Magical Protection

Protection from harmful entities is important. People are very open spiritually when they perform rituals. Magic can act as a beacon and can attract all kinds of entities to you, like moths to a flame. A well-cast circle will protect you from negative entities. If you're not the circle-casting type, call upon some other form of protection. You could write and recite an invocation for protection. You can also call upon your spirit guides, your ancestors, angels, or other

beneficial spirits for your highest good. Chapter 7 contains more information on spirits and how to work with them.

Methods of Casting a Circle

If you wish to cast a circle, you can do so in several ways. No one way is wrong, but however you cast a circle, it's important to cast it with energy. Make it strong with intent and purpose. If it feels vacuous, try casting a smaller circle. It doesn't have to be as big as the room you're in. It's up to you to decide when, if, and how this practice works for you. Here are a few options to consider. You could use one, two, or several of these practices when casting your circle.

Directional Quarters or Elemental Quarters

The most widely used method to cast a circle is to call the elemental quarters at the four cardinal directions. I start my circle casting in the east because it's the place where the moon and sun rise, and thus, it feels like a place of new beginnings to me. I proceed clockwise, which is sometimes called *deosil*. You don't have to start there and travel in that direction, though. I've heard that some witches start in the north or west. I've also heard about some witches in the Southern Hemisphere who cast a circle counterclockwise, or *widdershins*. The elements are also up for personal interpretation, as some people associate air in the north and earth in the east, or other various methods.

After you decide what element is associated with which direction, you'll want to ground and manifest that energy at each quarter and move with that energy to the next point. One of the best ways I know to do this is to imagine you're a vessel filled with the element, with the frequency of each element. For example, when I start in the east and hail air, I feel a cool breeze blow inside of me, light and flowy. Afterward, I face the south and feel fire and flames licking my body, then face the west and feel cool water flowing over me, then face the north and feel the solidness and strength of earth. I usually end at the center and feel the embodiment of spirit as electricity.

Try to feel the essence or vibration of the element before moving toward the next direction. The best thing about the four elements is that when you experience those different energetic states, it can help you reach an altered state within yourself because it activates all the different energetic states.

If you like the idea of casting a circle using the elements, you could create dedicated altars for each direction and elemental. These altars can have items and colors that represent that element to you, or they could also be something as subtle as tapestries or art hanging on the wall, which represents that energy or element. Traditionally, water is blue, fire is red or orange, air is yellow or white, and earth is green or brown. I use light brown and black for my center altar. Any colors can be used, as long as it resonates with you. You could also add other directions, such as above and below. Try various methods and do whichever one you like the best.

Guardians of the Watchtowers

One method of casting a quarter-based elemental circle is calling the Guardians of the Watchtowers of each direction, which is often used in traditional Wicca. The Guardians of the Watchtowers are beneficial spirits who act as protectors and repel malevolent spirits. If the concept resonates with you, it can be a very effective way to promote an energetic circle. This approach can also get the caster into a good mindset for working with spirits.

Elemental Spirit Hands

Another method of using the elements to cast a circle is to raise your hands up in the air and imagine the hands of that elemental vibration reaching out to hold yours. This puts you in direct contact with the spirit or energy of that direction or element. When the circle is cast, the holding hands concept can be used again if you imagine your hands clasping those elemental hands to form the circle.

Other Methods of Casting a Circle

Several other methods can be used to cast a circle that doesn't have anything to do with the elements or quarters. Here are some of my favorites.

Deities or Spirits

You can cast a circle using the energy of a deity, a spirit, or many deities and spirits. Sometimes, I use this method to call upon only one deity or spirit, invoking different aspects of them at each quarter. Other times, I call upon different deities or spirits at each quarter.

The method of using deities or spirits seems to be a common practice among intuitive witches, as the methods can be changed to whatever feels right in the moment. This is also a good solution for people who prefer to work with spirits other than the Guardians of the Watchtowers.

Physical Circle

Some people prefer to cast a circle with chalk, flour, cornmeal, salt, herbs, crystals, candles, strings of lights, or any other physical objects. If you use this kind of a circle, be as intentional as possible when laying your materials down. If you're partial to creating a perfect circle, you can do so by tying a string around a pencil or a piece of chalk and loosely tying the other end of the string to a heavy object, such as a lamp. With the string taut, draw a circle on the floor. Keep the pencil or chalk as vertical as possible. This method can also be used with a thumbtack pushed into the floor if you're okay with putting a small hole there.

Physical circles are a nice variation to energetic circles because the circle can be left up for a long time for long-term or regular magical acts. Bring everything you need for the ritual into the circle before you begin. I recommend making your objectives known that it is a magical circle each time you use it. From time to time, you may also need to strengthen it again. Be sure to not walk through it for mundane tasks—that will weaken it.

Athame Circle

You could cut yourself away from the mundane world with your athame. If you do so, do it with focus and energy work. You could imagine a flame of high spiritual energy coming from your body through the athame and emitting from the tip. Envision the athame cutting through the fabric of space.

Intentional Circle/Energetic Circle

Another option is to create an energetic circle with intention and energy. As you move around the circle, concentrate and use a strong, even energy by pushing it out of your hands or another tool. Imagine the energy parting and separating your circle from the mundane world. Imagine how the walls of the circle look and feel—like a bubble, with thin walls? Or are the walls thicker, like jelly? Maybe your circle stretches up and out to enclose you like a geodesic

dome, a circle of light, or a ring of brilliant, colored flame. Visualizing, imagining, and feeling the energetic aspects of your circle will assist with casting it effectively.

The Circle Is Cast!

After the casting is complete, make it known. You could say something as simple as "a circle is cast" or something more specific, such as "I cast this circle to protect me from harm and separate me from the energy of the mundane world that I may work on my manifestation spell in the magical, energetic realm."

If you cast a circle with enough energy, the space inside the circle will feel different. Experiment with the size and the shape of your circle to find one that works for you. Don't be daunted if you don't feel anything at first. With practice, you'll be able to better wield the power and feel the subtle sensations as well.

If you must leave the circle to retrieve something you forgot, part the walls of the circle energetically, as if you're parting heavy curtains with your hands. Seal the gap behind you by pushing the "curtains" closed, and run your hands over the seams. Enter back into the circle the same way, by parting the curtains and sealing the gap behind you.

Once a circle is cast, the magical work and energy raising may begin. There are several things you could do at this point. The remainder of this book is full of ideas and methods you can use.

Opening the Circle

When your magical work or ritual is done, it's time to release the energies and open the circle. This could be thought of as an "undoing" of the same things that you did to cast the circle, in the reverse or opposite manner. For example, let's say you cast elemental quarters starting in the east, continued casting in a clockwise manner, and then called upon spirits and the gods. You would open your circle by releasing the spirits or gods, then releasing the elemental quarters starting at north, and continuing counterclockwise to release the elemental quarters. By going counterclockwise, it "undoes" the magic you created going clockwise. This is another reason why it's good to use a book of shadows during ritual—when you write down what you did to create the circle, it's easy

to look back at what you did and undo everything in the exact same manner. It also frees your mind from keeping track of what you did, which lets you be more intuitive and free to call forth whatever energy comes up.

When the circle is open, acknowledge it with a finalizing statement. For example, you could say, "The circle is open." This helps our minds shift from a magical mindset back into grounded reality.

Post-Ritual Care

Whether you cast a circle or not, performing a big ritual takes a lot of energy. Afterward, you'll want to ground yourself in the physical world again. Replenish your physical energy by eating good food, drinking clean water or juice, and relaxing. Cuddle with your favorite people, kids, or pets, or just cuddle yourself. Write down your experiences in your book of shadows and take it easy. Do something that only requires a low amount of energy, like reading a book or watching a good show. Reconnecting with regular life activities makes the transition between high energy to medium energy easier and gives you the energy you need for the rest of the day. If you feel weak, take extra time to nourish yourself and replenish your energy.

Manifestation

The ability to draw people, experiences, or objects to you is called *manifestation*. My moon circle friends call it "galifestation" or "moonifestation"—"'cause I don't need a man!" Whether you agree with those words or not, manifestation is the science and art of combining strong willpower with a high frequency of spiritual energy and releasing it to the universe.

I'll never forget the time I decided to randomly manifest a red feather. I was walking through the grassy employee parking lot at the Renaissance festival to get to the faery wing booth I worked at. After closing my eyes for a moment, I imagined a red feather lying on the ground before me. I released the thought with gratitude and a smile. Much to my amazement, not even thirty steps from where I'd sent the energy out, I found a twelve-inch-long, curly red feather lying on the ground!

Manifestation doesn't always happen this quickly. Sometimes, it can take years. That shouldn't discourage you. If you have a desire, it's worth working toward. In many ways, we manifest things all the time without paying attention

to them. For instance, you applied for the job where you currently work, you were open to the romantic advances and developments of your relationship (or lack thereof), and you viewed the place where you now live before you signed the contract. Generally speaking, you're at this point now because, at one time, you wanted to be here. Realizing this gives us power to change what we don't like and attract what we want through manifestation. There are exceptions, of course. I don't believe we intentionally manifest harm from others. The blame of this falls squarely on the shoulders of the one who inflicted harm.

You don't need a ritual for manifestation. You can simply send your wishes out into the world, like I did with the red feather. However, in my experience, rituals are much more effective at attracting and keeping things. The choice is yours.

Intuitive Willpower

A fundamental part of witchcraft is working with intentions, goals, and will. These concepts are often used synonymously; however, in this book, I use these terms differently. For our purposes, an intention is an achievable personal desire. It's usually what we wish to become or change. It's more about "being" as opposed to "doing." Intentions reflect our wish for a realignment of our current energies to what we wish to see or become.

In intuitive witchcraft, goals are defined as mostly external accomplishments that can be achieved using intentions, our magic, and time. They're more concerned with "doing" than "being." Goals can be personal or worldly.

Will is the combination of intentions and goals. It produces an aligned force of energy that's bigger than the sum of its parts. This section contains a deeper discussion of will and includes a willpower ritual. The ritual is usually performed on new moons, but it can be used whenever you need to make a change in your life.

Will: The Arrow

My favorite way of thinking about will, or intentions and goals, is as an arrow. Your intentions are the general direction the archer must face, and your goals are the targets at which the arrow will be aimed. Your will must be sharp enough and plumb enough to fly through the world and land successfully.

The first step to creating a good arrow is to carefully choose your intention and sharpen it until it's aerodynamic. Intention starts with *I*, and it's all about you. When drafting your intention, ask yourself, "What can *I* do to reach these goals? What do *I* wish to change?" Use your intuition to think about your intention. What do you wish to change within yourself? Even if you want to continue living in your current state, that's still an intention. Use language that states your intention in the positive present state: for example, "I am," as opposed to "I want." Wanting implies a lack, whereas speaking as if we have it and own those qualities grows the energy already within you. Choose a couple of goals that go with your intention. They should be related to the intention and specific, but not too limiting.

Let's put it together. Say you want to be better at witchcraft. Your intention statement would be "I am a better witch every day." Some appropriate goals for this intention might be to read two books on witchcraft in the next two months, to meditate five times a week, and to practice magic on the full moons and new moons. This would create a very sharp will because the intention is clearly defined and positive. The goals are achievable and support the intention.

Many times, when a ritual involving will is unsuccessful, it's because the intentions or goals aren't strong enough. Someone who has an intention to become a better witch but no goals might not know what to do. They could get confused wondering what they should do. To put it another way, they'd get lost in the "beingness" of it all without any way to measure their progress. On the other hand, someone who has no intention but has goals of reading and practicing might not be very successful, either. Sure, they'd learn and experience things, but they could get lost in the "doingness" and never feel as if they're aligned to anything. They might ask themselves why they're doing it. What's the point? Being and doing go together naturally. When they're consciously aligned, you have will—a sharp arrow with a smooth shaft. That kind of arrow can definitely go far.

Willpower: The Archer

When your will is combined with high-frequency spiritual energy in ritual, it's called empowered will or *willpower*. This is what happens when the archer takes the sharp arrow of your will, nocks it in their bow, and draws the string

back with all their might. The energy of the archer must be strong enough to make the arrow fly far, so it can hit its target. They must use a high frequency of energy to shoot the arrow. If will is combined with low or medium energy instead, there's little to no power behind the will, and the arrow will clatter to the ground near the archer's feet.

For this reason, will is most effective when used with the higher frequencies, even if only for a short time. This is one of the most basic purposes of ritual—to take your will, raise the energy to be a higher frequency, and release it into the world. This kind of magic has the power to change people internally and the world externally.

To Spell or Not to Spell?

Spellwork is will made into poetry. It can be a thrilling aspect of witchcraft. For some witches, spells are inherent to their successes. They love a good phrase or rhyme and can feel the magic build when they recite them. Not every witch likes using spells, though, and I understand the sentiment. I usually don't resonate with spells that other people write. It wasn't until I started crafting my own that I viewed them differently. They became more personal—more me. And unlike many of the other spells I used, mine actually worked for me.

Spells are completely optional. A statement of will can easily suffice for your magical works.

If you *do* wish to use spells, try to create your own rather than looking them up on the internet or in books. It can be really fun to be creative and write down your ideas. However, if you're not a good writer or a poet, use whatever you wish. A good intuitive witch is resourceful and will choose whatever spell feels right. Here are the best tips I have for successful spellwork:

- ★ Use a serious spell. If your spell is silly, you may be distracted, and your magic won't be as powerful.
- ★ The words don't have to rhyme. Use words that resonate with you instead of ones that fit a rhyming scheme. But if they happen to rhyme and you like it, great.
- ★ Be specific. Every word counts, so only use the ones that agree with your will.

- ★ Use words you understand. Look up words that you don't know or aren't certain about. I only use words from the handful of languages I speak to ensure my will comes through. If I don't speak the language the spell is written in, I don't speak the words. That way, you can be sure you're not unintentionally asking for marriage when you may just be looking for love or lust.
- ★ Use a cadence of words in your spell that feels natural. Some spells are so old that the English language was different and the words no longer flow well together. Or maybe the spell was translated into English from another language, and something was lost in translation. There's nothing wrong with these spells, but sometimes, the words just don't flow off my tongue. Think about it this way: if the rhythm of the spell doesn't match the energy that needs to be channeled, it could be ineffective. For example, read each of these spell fragments and pay attention to the beats. These aren't magnificent, but they'll do as examples. "I create joy and love in my life." This spell fragment is simple and has a rhythm or a beat to it. You can almost hear a drumbeat that could go along with it. This spell would be useful in raising energy if it's repeated. Here's the second example: "I channel abundant joy and many warm, loving relationships with others." This spell fragment is much longer. It's beautiful and meaningful, but it doesn't have a beat. The energy of the sentence seems to trip over itself. I find myself losing focus if I repeat it, so it's not a good candidate. But that's just me. Figure out what cadence works for you.
- ★ Whatever spell you use should intuitively resonate with you. If something feels off about it, you shouldn't use it.
- ★ You can start with a spell you found online and rewrite it with your will in mind. Swap out words as you see fit, until it feels perfect.

Write It Down, Speak It Aloud

Be sure to write down your will or spell. You may be tempted to merely think about them, but there's much more power in the written and spoken word. This seemingly small step will take your abstract will and make it more concrete. Writing something down and then speaking it aloud affects the body and mind. It grounds and activates the electrical energy of your aura and opens us

up to more possibilities. Whenever we speak our desires aloud, the possibility of them coming true becomes more real. Many witches believe that magic really wants to work with us and is just waiting for us to state our will.

The first thing that happens after we speak our will or the spell is that our energy fields change. The words and the power behind them alter our subtle frequencies to make us a conductor of energy. This power helps us attract concurrent energies and repel discordant ones. Speaking our will aloud also makes our desires known to any spirits or gods present.

RITUAL

WILLPOWER MADE MANIFEST

Cleanse a space and cast a circle to assist with raising energy and to act as a vessel. Center yourself by taking a deep breath and connecting to your intuition. Release any energy that is not yours and call back any energy that is not with you. With a few more deep breaths, allow your energy within your body to become balanced. Scan your chakras mentally, starting at the lowest chakra, at the tailbone. Envision them shifting into their natural homeplaces along your spine. If any are not spinning or if they're sluggish, envision them as spinning wheels of light. Continue this alignment up your spine until you finish with your crown chakra. Write down your intention and goal(s) into your book of shadows. Write down a spell, if you wish. Be clear and concise.

Connect to your higher self. You can invite your spirit guide or any other spirits or deities you work with to be present by saying something like, "I call forth my spirit guides and Athena, goddess of courage and wisdom. Please be with me in my circle and assist me with my magical work tonight."

Speak your will or spell aloud with confidence and strength. You may feel a tangible shift in the room.

Repeat your will or spell with increasing passion, speed, and pitch. This will raise the energy in the circle. As you do so, envision your desired wishes coming true. Feel the possibilities or truth within you. Feel the energy bubbling up from within you, raising the frequency.

When you're near the climax, recite the spell or your will in one breath, if possible. Repeat it, increasing your speed, until you approach

the climax. When the energy reaches a peak, raise your hands up and out, and release your will to the world. Feel the arrow of your will flying fast and far, away from you and into the world. Envision your arrow hitting your target with perfect accuracy. From that moment forth, your willpower will radiate out from you into everything and everyone you encounter.

Take a deep breath and shake off any lingering energy. Extend thanks to any external assistance, including your higher self, the gods, or spirits you worked with by thanking them from the bottom of your heart and releasing them: "I humbly thank my higher self, my spirit guides, and Athena for your assistance in this work. I release you from this circle. Stay if you will; go if you must." Open the circle by performing the same rites you used to cast the circle, only go backward and release what you called upon instead of invoking it. Practice post-ritual care to nourish your body and ground your energy. If you feel lightheaded, you may wish to eat some food. Rest and relax, and bask in the afterglow of your ritual.

Write down what happened in your book of shadows and reflect on your experiences. Did you cast the circle with energy? What went well? What didn't go as well as it could have? Did the spell work? Did anything unexpected happen? Will you try casting a circle and using a spell next time? Be honest about where you are and what your strengths are. It can help you find areas in need of growth. Even if your ritual doesn't go perfectly the first time, don't assume your attempt was unsuccessful. You never know how well things work until a bit of time passes. Plus, we all have to start somewhere. With repetition, performing a ritual like this will feel more natural.

The Circle Is Open but Unbroken

The tools and methods in this chapter can help you develop a personalized ritual that works for you. I recommend following the general ritual structure of preritual cleansing, sharpening will for the ritual, raising energy, releasing your will into the world at the climax, and postritual care. This general ritual structure can create a strong foundation to effect change. Further chapters in this

book will build upon these methods and delve deeper into higher frequencies of energy and the mysteries.

Magic is like a workout. You get back whatever you put into it. If you have doubts about the strength of your will or energy, keep going. It will get easier. Contrary to previous scientific thought, willpower is not a limited resource that depletes rapidly. It is more like a talent or ability that gets stronger the more we use it.[15] With time and practice, you'll be able to perform magical acts with a strong, aligned energy.

Further Reading List

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15. Nir Eyal, "This Myth About Willpower Is Holding Back Your Productivity," *Fast Company*, November 28, 2016, https://www.fastcompany.com/3065981/this-myth-about-willpower-is-holding-back-your-productivity.

Chapter 4

Making Intuitive Magic Come Alive

By now, you've worked with all three tenets of intuitive witchcraft. You've trusted yourself enough to follow your intuition, aligned your internal energy, and released your will into the world. But that's not all there is to intuitive witchcraft. That's just the beginning.

It's time to learn about all the other intuitive magics and how to raise energy in other ways besides repetition of will or a spell. This chapter is teeming with ideas, from the profound to the mundane, to make magic really come alive. Just like the witch tools in the previous chapter, these magics are all about externalizing our internal energies. Although external items and actions aren't truly necessary to perform magic, it can help to have concrete objects to work with—to handle, soak, enchant, and transform. This is the work that'll make you stronger and more able to manifest your desires. Be sure to infuse every act of magic with your energy and will. And don't be intimidated by the sheer amount of information and technique in this chapter. Use what you need in the moment and save the rest for a rainy day.

Raising Energy

Raising energy is an important part of magic. It's the key to transforming a situation according to your will. Just like when I walked on hot coals with a higher frequency of energy and I didn't get burned, magical things happen when we

escalate our energies into the more blissful realms. When we don't raise energy, we get burned—or more likely, we have no power behind our will.

Einstein supposedly said, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." In other words, the solution to a problem is never found in the same realm in which the problem exists. Whether it's an actual quote from the genius himself or not, it's still meaningful. We can use the implication that higher energy and magic can help you find solutions where there were none before. I've found this to be true in many ways in my own life, and that's why it's included in this book.

The process of raising energy begins with becoming fully aware and in the present moment. Focus on the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects at hand. Be present in all of those aspects. Center and align yourself, then elevate your energy to get beyond medium energy, or your default mode. In the last chapter, raising energy was accomplished through repetition of the will or a spell, but there are several other ways to do this. This chapter contains some basic ways to raise energy in ritual or practice. Try them out and use whatever creates a shift. We can embody the energetic change we wish to see by feeling it in our bodies, emotions, thoughts, and spirit, and then, release it to the world. More advanced methods of raising energy will be presented in chapter 10.

Movement

Moving your body moves all forms of energy within you. Some people like to walk or dance around the circle clockwise as they speak their will or spell. Other people may prefer to sway in place. Do whatever you feel is right for your ritual. Let your feet grow light and your fingertips play with the air. Free your torso and your shoulders. Express your feelings or story through movement. Clench your muscles or make a fist. Move intuitively. Every movement is laden with meaning. Our postures and body language affect our emotional, mental, and spiritual states. Tune in to your desires and channel the right movement for whatever act of magic you do.

Vocal Intonation

Vocal work isn't limited to reciting a spell or chanting your will. You can also raise energy with your voice through vocal intonation. Try speaking with more

power or a little bit of drama to command more attention and energy. By expanding the throat or compressing it slightly, you can create an otherworldly sounding voice. The musicality of your voice can also be emphasized. Enunciate key words to make the message clearer. Play with the intensities of sounds until you create a resonant voice that commands attention and doesn't distract you or anyone else from your message. Another bonus: when you speak with a different voice from your regular voice, you can train your mind to process the words differently. This makes the words more effective and can be used to effortlessly raise your energy.

Sing or Make Music

Sing your spells or your will with power and grace. Sing a song that seems to correlate with your will or use a nonsense language and make up a tune. Intuitive vocal noises can also be used. Try making long notes, intuitive melodies, percussive beats, and breathy sounds. To raise the energy, increase the tempo and pitch of your song. Incorporate vocal intonation if you want to make it more powerful.

If you're gifted in rhythm, melody, or any kind of musical ability, make music to raise energy. Focus on the present moment and let the instrument become an extension of yourself, expressing your desire and energy. Feel the notes or beats vibrate in your body, and let yourself be moved. Ideally, you'll be able to enter a trancelike state, which is indicative of higher frequencies.

Play Music on a Stereo

If a good song has ever moved you emotionally, you know the awesome power of music. It's an extremely effective tool that can easily be used to alter your mindset and raise energy. I like to play a few songs when I'm preparing for a ritual and also during ritual. Create a ritual playlist to help you channel higher vibrations and possibly even a trance state.

Breath Work

Many cultures believe that breath and life are synonymous. By controlling our breathing, we can control the life force within us. When we consciously take deep breaths and hold our breath before breathing again, it focuses our energy, centering and aligning us. Slower breaths can intentionally lower our energy,

such as for a calming ritual or meditation. Breath work can also be used to raise energy. Fast, short breaths elevate our heartbeat and increase our energetic frequency. Think about your breath during foreplay, sex, and orgasm. There's a buildup, a high point, and a release, all mediated by and coordinated with the breath. Use whichever breath work most suits your needs.

Draw Energy from the Natural World

Natural places abound with raw energy. Think of a waterfall, a serene autumnal forest, a windswept beach, or a jagged mountain range. It's likely that just thinking about those natural places makes you feel more peaceful and inspired. Natural places are alive with a number of energies, including plants, animals, water, geology, microbes, and much more. You can draw energy from natural places to raise your energy. You even pull energy from the earth, the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars.

To do so, get in touch with the spirit of a place, also known as the *genius loci*. The place will have an energy and an intelligence all its own. Align with it for a few minutes with deep breaths. Once you feel it and are balanced, call the energy into your body. Tangibly pull it within you, or invite it to flow through you. Feel the spirit and mind of the place. Let it clear away your blockages. Draw it up through the earth with full breaths, with each breath increasing the feeling. Hold the energy and let it concentrate within you.

Think of this practice as charging yourself with natural energy. Use the practice in rituals to reach an elevated frequency, to charge an object, or to heal yourself or others. You can also merge this energy with your will and send it out into the world. When you're done with your work, release the excess energy back into the natural world by placing your palms on the earth and giving thanks.

Use the Energy of Colors

When sunlight refracts, the different wavelengths appear to the human eye as colors. Red is the lowest visible wavelength or frequency, and the highest is violet. Color can be used in ritual to embody different aspects of vibration in accordance with your intuition. After choosing a color that goes with your theme, envision the ritual area being filled with it. Visualize the color growing and spiraling around as you raise energy. Feel that specific vibration run

through you. When you're ready to send it out, envision your will as a colorful fountain blasting out into the universe.

Use Ritual Garb

Use the same clothing and jewelry for rituals to make those items take on special meaning. Call your spiritual attire something special if it helps you impart meaning to it. For example, wear your "sacred cloak" or dress yourself with "the necklace of wisdom." Whenever you adorn yourself with those ritual items, your mind will move in the sacred direction without even trying. Alternately, wearing nothing at all may be even more special, as it carries no significance but your true self, as you are.

Use Your Senses

When we enjoy sensations and pleasures, we can bring forth a sweeter internal energy. This can lead to an altered state, and possibly an elevated trance state. Create a beautiful space for your rituals. Make it visually stimulating. You could paint the walls your favorite color, listen to inspiring music, wear fabrics that make you feel good, touch something luxurious such as a cat's fur, eat mouth-watering food, and use the best incense or essential oils. Some essential oils, such as rose or agarwood, have higher vibrations and can easily uplift you even more.

Talk about Your Hopes and Dreams

What inspires you? What do you want out of life? If nothing was holding you back, what would you do with your life? Thinking and talking about your hopes and dreams can make you feel more open and alive. It doesn't even have to be specific for the ritual. It only has to inspire you. Merely opening up to the possibility of your desire coming true will raise your energy.

Concentrate Your Personal Energy

We all have our own personal energy. Everything about us—our appearance, our preferences, and our frequencies of energy—is distinctive. Tune in to who you are or the things that make you *you*. You could focus on your features, your spirit, your abilities and expressions, your scent, your frequency, or anything else that's unique to you. Expand upon your unique energy with deep breaths,

feeling everything that's undeniably you. Accept everything about yourself and magnify it. Be yourself, effortlessly, and fall in love with who you are. Uncover your personal power from deep within and let it shine throughout your whole body. Feel your aura saturate with the vibrancy, strength, and power of *you*, glorious you. Amplify it, expand it. Turn it up to 11! Give yourself even more freedom to be exactly who you are. Stand strong in your essence and power, and use your personal energy to create from a place of strength.

Channel Your Higher Self

Your higher self is the highest version of you, without any physical needs, emotional drama, or mental limitations. It's basically you as pure spiritual energy. You've probably channeled your higher self before, especially if you've ever entered a state of timelessness. To channel your higher self in a ritual, meditate on your upper chakras. Shift internally to the vibration of your higher self, letting go of everything else. Let your higher self see through your eyes and feel with your hands. This is similar to the Wiccan practice of "drawing down the moon," only instead of inviting a deity into your body, you're welcoming in your most spiritual self.

Bless Your Food and Beverages

As noted in chapter 2, studies support the theory that blessing food and beverages can actually make them better for us. Hold your hands over the food or beverage and state an intention such as, "This sandwich will nourish me on a cellular level and provide me positive energy." You can also bless food for others. If you're giving the blessed food to others, offer the blessing as a gift that they could either accept or decline. For example, "May this food nourish the people who eat it, if they wish it to be so."

Cleansing

Cleansing the body physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually can help you access higher realms. Activities can include bathing, soaking, fasting, sweat lodges, saunas, deep meditative states, yoga, movement such as dance or exercise, and so much more. Find a cleansing method that works for you and cleanse regularly.

Auric Charge

In a meditative state, cast an electric charge in your aura in any color you wish. Imagine it extending out a couple of feet in all directions. See it transforming anything that's not in accordance with your highest good. Use it to uplift you and make you feel whole and loved. It's a wonderful way to feel empowered and raise energy for ritual.

Combine Energy-Raising Activities

To get the energy even higher, combine one or more of these. For example, dance to music while you play a drum. Draw up green-colored energy from the natural world. Intonate your voice as you talk about your dreams. The goal is to raise your energy in any way that makes you feel inspired. Find what works for you and keep at it.

Higher vibrations can give you physical sensations—your skin may prickle, your neck could feel tingly, your scalp might buzz, or your heart may blaze with love. These are signs that higher energies have been raised and the spiritual energy is so strong that it affects our physical bodies. In other words, it means that our magic is working. We're on the right path.

EXERCISE

RAISING ENERGY

Complete an energy evaluation using the energy grid from chapter 2 (see page 44). Raise energy using one of the methods in this chapter. Go for it. Even if it feels silly, try it out. Complete an energy evaluation again with the grid and note the differences. Was that method of raising energy successful?

Using Intuition to Create Personal Correspondences

A correspondence is anything that can be used to strengthen a ritual. This can be almost anything, including plants, colors, planets, zodiac signs, essential oils, crystals or minerals, hours of the day, days of the week, and natural objects such as seashells. Many witchcraft books have tables of information about correspondences, but I've found that creating your own correspondences according to your intuition and energy is much more rewarding. Besides, it can

be overwhelming to learn all the correspondences, and some of them may not ring true to you. For example, there's a lot of subjectivity to color. Some people use a white candle for protection, but to others, a black candle feels more protective. Some correspondences are arbitrary, such as days of the week and hours of the day, which are completely human-made concepts that change during daylight savings time. More empirical times might be sunrise and sunset, moonrise and moonset, the dark moon, full moon, and the solar stations, such as winter solstice or autumn equinox. (More on those in the next chapter.)

When creating personal correspondences, consider the energy of the item. There's a huge difference between dirt from your ancestors' graves, sand from a beach, and soil from your backyard. Grave dirt is more powerful for working with your beloved dead, the beach is better for general water magic, and the soil from your backyard is best for personal or home magic.

Think about your personal association with the item, if you have one. For example, if you remember making gingerbread cookies with your grandmother, you'll recall those sweet memories when you use cinnamon, allspice, and ginger. Your positive memories mean you have a good relationship with those spices, and they're probably allies. On the other hand, if you were forced to pick chamomile flowers as a punishment, you may not associate them with calming energy, as many other people do.

I challenge you to think bigger than what's in the books and what's on the internet. Ponder what the correspondences represent to you. Take them into your energy field and feel them out, then decide what feels true for you. Write down your associations in your book of shadows for quick reference.

One last note—while correspondences may assist you in your magic, you don't need anything external. The magic really is within you. There are a lot of minimalist witches who only buy candles, tea, incense, and books (if that), and that's a perfectly fine way to practice too.

EXERCISE

PERSONAL COLOR CORRESPONDENCES

Write down a list of colors in your book of shadows, leaving empty space beside each entry. Take a few deep breaths and enter a relaxed mindset. Start at the top of your list. What do you feel when you think of the first color? What images does it remind you of? What part of

your life do you recall? Does it make you think of anyone else? Do emotions or thoughts arise? For example, the color red could be associated with fire, love, lust, blood, sports cars, heat, strength, roses, weddings, the winter holidays, apples, and autumn. This is a complex snapshot of the color red, but any of these concepts can be used in your magic. Write down your personal color correspondences in your book of shadows and circle the strongest emotions. The stronger the emotional response, the stronger your magic will be.

EXERCISE

PERSONAL PLANT CORRESPONDENCES

Find an herb or plant that grows locally—perhaps in your backyard. Sit with the plant. Align your own energy, and then align with the plant's energy. Close your eyes and imagine that you can see its energy. What do the plant's properties feel like? What message or feeling does the plant's energy have? What areas of your body do you feel it activate? Does it stir up any emotions? Write down what you feel in your book of shadows. Here's an example of what I felt for the raspberry bush in my backyard: sacred, strength, ability to transmute sadness and grief into a feeling of peace, and the ability to raise energy. This plant would be good for many types of magic. When you're done, thank the plant's spirit. Repeat this exercise with other plants, essential oils, and stones to create your own personal correspondence tables.

Simple Intuitive Magics

Thus far, we've discussed raising energy and releasing it out and into the world, but that's not the only option. You can also use simple intuitive magic to effect change. Simple intuitive magics have a basic formula:

will + personal correspondences + raising energy + magical action = magic

This might sound complicated, but it's actually quite simple once you get the hang of it.

If you'd like to get started, sharpen your will. Write down your intention and goals. Next, gather personal correspondences. Think about what you have on hand that corresponds to your will. Consult your book of shadows or

choose from whatever crystals, minerals, plants, and essential oils you have lying around. I like to raid my spice cabinet, kitchen shelves, tea boxes, refrigerator, outdoor plants, indoor plants, junk drawers, altars, and everywhere else I can think of for ingredients. If you want to perform personal magic, you could use personal items, such as your hair, fingernail clippings, saliva, a scrap of your clothing, or something else that has your energy. If the magic is for an external quality that doesn't have a lot of correspondences, you can write it down on a slip of paper or use something that represents that energy. For example, if you want to perform simple intuitive magic for strength, and you don't have any personal correspondences that represent strength, you could use a figurine of an elephant or write down "strength" on a scrap of paper.

Raise energy in any of the ways described earlier in this chapter. Choose a method that works with your will. If you're aiming for strength, lift weights. If you want to be graceful, dance. Start raising energy, and when you're close to the peak, perform the magical action.

The magical action can include any kind of action in a ritual or practice. I call it "magical action" to differentiate it from a regular action, and also to imply that you are adding the magic by consciously directing the energies at hand. The best action for your magic should be in accordance with what you want. Use your intuition to choose an activity that transforms the energy of your personal correspondences into the energy of your will. For example, if you want to banish your weakness, you could write "my weakness" on a piece of paper and use the action of burning it to transform the energy, destroying your weakness. Other magical actions you could use with your personal correspondences could include heating, scorching, cooling, freezing, grinding, ripping, repairing, sewing, flushing, diluting, corroding, combining, containing, destroying, burying, throwing, hitting, releasing, freeing, scattering, wearing down, elevating, lowering, and so on. While performing the magical action, focus on transforming the energy.

Let's put it all together in an example. Say you have a will to feel cleansed and relaxed before ritual. This is a common need for most witches. Maybe you'll choose the personal correspondences of sea salt, which makes you feel purified, and ylang-ylang oil, which makes you feel serene. Bathing is a perfect magical action for this will, because you associate soaking in a bath with relaxing. And so, you run the water and add the salt and essential oil to the bath water, combining

	Will or Spell		Personal Correspondences	Raising Energy	Magical Action
	Intention	Goal(s)			
Definition	"I" statements. Present tense. You have some control over this.	Achievable. Specific, but not too specific. Both you and the outside world influence it.	Anything you associate with your will.	Any action that boosts your energy to a higher frequency.	Any action taken in ritual or practice with the goal of changing the current energy.
Examples	I am calm. I am magical. I am powerful. I am creative.	I meditate three times a day. I observe the sabbats and esbats. I work on my creative projects three times a week.	Plants, colors, planets, zodiac signs, essential oils, crystals or minerals, hours of the day, days of the week, natural objects, deities, spirits, etc.	Movement, singing, dancing, making music, playing music, breath work, drawing energy from nature, using spelled or charged objects, using your senses, channeling your higher self, auric charge, sexuality, stimuli, etc.	Burn, heat, scorch, melt, cool, freeze, grind, rip, repair, sew, bind together, charge, enchant, invigorate, flush, throw, hit, release, free, scatter, wear down, elevate, lower, grow, dilute, corrode, cover, combine, contain, bury, destroy, etc.
Love Magic Example	I am magnetically attractive to my perfect lover.	My loving partner treats me with respect and romance, and they are open to handfasting.	Rose, lily, neroli, ivy, Venus, rose quartz, garnet, raspberries, black candles, vanilla beans, waxing moon, Tuesday, 2:00.	Dancing, singing, meditating, anointing with oils.	Combining ingredients, massaging into candle and body while chanting will at that day and time, burying in the earth.
Hex Example	I hex XYZ.*	May XYZ dream of falling every night until he returns my $25.	A poppet that looks like XYZ, crow, trickster spirits, the element of air.	Stomping, intuitive movements, breath work.	Dropping poppet from a height, scaring poppet.

*See chapter 9 for the ethics of hexing and working with other peoples' energies.

them. The action of bathing lets the energies of the salt and the essential oil infuse into you. As you bathe, you inhale deeply of the essential oil and you consciously shift your energy to be more cleansed and relaxed. As you step out of the tub and towel off, you notice you do indeed feel cleansed and relaxed. The magic worked! Simple intuitive magics are that easy.

This section contains a few examples of simple intuitive magics you can use in practice or ritual. It's by no means an exhaustive list. If you don't see what you need, you have the power to make up your own simple intuitive magic.

Spell Jars

The basic cure for many ails is a well-crafted spell jar. Spell jars use the magical act of combining various things together to make them work together. It's a great magic to do with a willpower ritual.

The first thing you'll need is a good jar. You could recycle a jar that once held food or wine, or you can purchase a fancy bottle for this purpose. Thrift stores usually have a variety of them to choose from at a reduced price, and you'll be reusing them instead of purchasing a new one. Glass is my preferred choice for spell jars because it doesn't interact with the ingredients. However, anything with a watertight lid or a stopper will work. A metal container can be used if you feel that the metal resonates with the magic, but it can corrode, which can corrupt the magic. Plastic could be used too—it has flexible properties, which could be good for your spells, but it could also leach chemicals and interact with your magic. Consider choosing light-colored jars or bottles to see the ingredients inside. You may also want to think about using a specific container for your will. For example, if you want to spice up your life, use a hot sauce bottle. If you want to sweeten your relationship with yourself, use an empty molasses jar. Use color correspondences when you choose jars too, if choices are available.

To create your spell jar, craft your will by thinking about the energy you want. If you wish, you can work with the moon phase that you intuitively feel corresponds with your intention. Moon phase energies will be covered in chapter 5, but for now, it's okay to use your intuition about which phase corresponds to it. Get some personal correspondences that go with the energy of your will from your home, yard, altars, kitchen, and so on. Get a bowl or a cauldron and gather your ingredients together in the place where you'll per-

form this magic. You'll use the bowl or cauldron for mixing the correspondences together before adding it to the jar.

I recommend having a circle to hold the magical energy. I also recommend having a ritual in order to direct the energy. Cast a circle, then state the purpose of the jar. For each ingredient you add to the bowl or cauldron, speak its purpose, then drop it into the bowl/cauldron. For example, "I add blue glitter to enhance my communication and make my words sparkle." Appreciate the qualities of each ingredient as you add them to the bowl/cauldron. Smell the oil, enjoy the flash of the silver charm, feel the texture of the herbs, dirt, or sand, and so on.

Mix everything together in the bowl or cauldron to alchemize the energies. You could use a spoon or a stick, but I prefer using my hands to feel it all come together. Use your intuition to know if it needs more of anything. If so, add it until the energy feels right. If any emotions arise, let them come up and move through them. Feelings are often part of the magical process.

When all ingredients have been mixed together, recite your spell or your will while putting the items into the jar or bottle. You're using the magical actions of combining and containerizing. You can use a spoon, a funnel, or simply your hands. Raise energy by chanting, singing, reciting your will, or any other method. If you wish your magic to flow or if you want it to have a watery feel to it, add water to the jar until it almost reaches the top—leave a little bit of air so you can mix the jar. When your raised energy reaches a peak, imagine all of your energy going into the jar. If you can direct energy with your hands, do so. Seal the container, then shake it. As you do so, feel yourself possessing the emotion you desire while visualizing your desired outcome. Release any excess energy with a sigh and a stretch. Give thanks, then open the circle.

Anytime you need more of that energy in your life, shake the spell jar to stir up the magic again. Place the spell jar somewhere useful. For example, an empowering spell jar could go on one of your altars. A home protection spell jar could be buried just outside your home to deter pesky people and spirits. You can keep spell jars for decades, or as long as you want that magic to keep working. If the magic wears off or runs its course, empty the contents carefully, especially if there are any poisonous materials, biohazards such as blood, or rusty objects inside. Safely dispose of those materials, taking care to never leave them anywhere it could do harm. When in doubt, throw them out in the

trash. After washing the jar, you could reuse it for another spell jar, or if the energy seems to be stained with that energy, simply recycle it.

Bath Magic

Healing with water has been a common practice for millennia. If you have a bathtub, you can easily have a magical aquatic experience in the privacy of your own home. Magical actions associated with soaking in hot water include creating warmth and infusing yourself with personal correspondences by soaking with them. There are two basic magical baths: those that let you absorb energy and those that let you release energy. Either one of these magical baths can cleanse you before ritual or can seal in energy after a ritual. It's all about intention.

Absorbing baths let you draw in energy. They charge you with an intent, thought, or emotion. To make an absorbing bath, create a statement of will. Run the water and set into the tub selected stones, herbs, a little salt, and essential oils that suit your needs. Only use herbs and oils that are safe for external use and won't cause an allergic reaction. As the waters rise, imagine that the waters are invigorated with the energy you desire. Imagine the bath being a certain color if that suits you, and see the water become that color. Place your hands over the waters and recite your spell or will out loud. Charge the water with your will. When you step into the bath, stir the bathwater clockwise and feel the energy increase. Draw the energy inside of you, really feeling it. Soak in the luxurious feeling and meditate on higher vibrations. Before leaving the bath, embrace yourself and pull all the energies inside you until there is none left in the bathwater. Feel the energy saturate your entire body. When you towel off, carry the energy with you.

Releasing baths are an excellent way to let go and banish old or negative energy. Whether you want to release bad habits, stagnant energy, or if you're feeling stuck, a releasing bath can get you to a better place. Run the bath with your chosen stones, herbs, essential oils, and other detoxifying ingredients, such as Epsom salt, sea salt, baking soda, apple cider vinegar, powdered clay, witch hazel, or activated charcoal. Ask the waters to help you release your stuck energy and cleanse you. Recite your will, then step into the bath and stir the bathwater counterclockwise. Imagine your body releasing the negative energy. See it seeping out of you like tea from a teabag. If this imagery doesn't

work, imagine the bath neutralizing your negative energy. Make some intuitive noises and movements to really release the old energies. Gently massage all parts of your body before stepping out of the bath. Look at the water and what you've left behind. Pull the plug and watch it leave down the drain, feeling it leave you energetically, until it's completely gone. This practice can also work with a shower as opposed to a bath.

Always set the mood for your bath with candles, salts, herbs, music, oils, and incense. Choose the color of your candle and your correspondences based on your mood and desire. Use your intuition to choose loose herbs or brew strong herbal tea in a cup, and after it has steeped, pour it into your bath. After magical baths, drink a big glass of water to encourage integration of the energy.

Candle Magic

Candles are magical; there's no denying that. Magical actions associated with candles include shedding light on issues and burning, transforming, or destroying. The most basic form of candle magic is to light a candle while thinking about your will or reciting it. As the flame dances, you can observe the energy you direct toward your will.

You can also dedicate a candle to a particular magic. Use a large candle if you want to work on something over a long period of time, such as a money-drawing candle for better finances. A large candle also works best if you need to perform ongoing magic, such as working with your ancestors. To dedicate a candle to assist with a certain kind of magic, choose a candle with a color that will be suitable for the work, according to your personal correspondences. Blend a few essential oils together in a small dish until they smell exactly like your will for the candle. Cast a circle, then call upon your higher powers, gods, or spirits, and ask them to bless the candle with their insights, wisdom, power, or whatever energy is appropriate. With a pin or a knife, carve sigils, symbols, or words into the candle. If the candle is encased in glass, use a marker to draw on it. Metallic markers work particularly well. Anoint the candle with the essential oil blend, taking care not to smear anything written with a marker. Recite a spell or your will, increasing the power behind your words. If desired, raise energy some other way. When the energy reaches a peak, hold the candle high above you and draw the energy into the candle. Finally, light the candle and bask in its glow, feeling your energy align with it. When you're

done, thank the powers that be and open the circle. Let the candle burn for at least an hour. Whenever you want to feel that energy again, light the candle. You can also re-oil the carving and recite the original spell or statement of will.

Charging Objects

Charging an object is like plugging it into a natural energy source in order to charge its battery. Setting an object in sunlight or moonlight gives the object the energy of the light to which it was exposed, like a solar or lunar panel. If the sunlight or moonlight was from a particularly special time, such as the Midsummer sun, the Libra full moon, or an eclipse, the charged object will carry that special energy and, thus, influence the magical practice or ritual when you eventually use it.

It's easy to use sunlight to charge objects. Simply leave items on your windowsill or outside for a certain length of time, using your intuition. Do some research to make sure whatever you're leaving outside can handle full sun. Some crystals and minerals, such as amethyst, moonstone, and apatite, can fade with exposure to the ultraviolet light that naturally occurs in sunlight.

Charging by moonlight is a little trickier due to the timing. You have to be aware of what time the moon rises and sets and try to place the object in the light during those times. The full moon is usually used, which rises around sunset and stays out until about sunrise. See chapter 5 for information about moonrise and moonset, according to the moon phase.

To make moonwater (water charged in the light of the full moon), fill a potable container such as a glass or a ceramic bowl with water. I prefer glass because it has fewer impurities compared to metal or plastic, which could inadvertently change the energy of the charged object. Also, please note that while a crystal vase might appear to be a stunning way to charge moonwater, it could contain lead and other contaminants. Only use containers that are considered safe for drinking water. After dinner, place the vessel outside. Cover the top so no pollen, rainwater, insects, or other contaminants get in. You can also set your vessel on a windowsill if moonlight reaches it. This is preferred if temperatures are freezing—no one likes to clean up shattered glass from frozen moon water. If possible, leave the water out all night so it can capture the full moon's light. Don't worry if skies are cloudy—a little light will still reach the object. In the morning,

take it in. You can drink this water and feel recharged, use it in a jar or bottle spell, use it to water your plants, or refill your fountain, if you have one.

Crystals and other objects can be charged with sunlight or moonlight in the same way, but they don't need a container. After charging them, place them on your altar, in your pocket, or use them as part of a spelled object, such as a jar or a bag.

Other ways to charge objects with the natural energy of the elements include touching them to the earth, briefly touching them to fire, letting the wind blow over them, or dipping them in a natural body of water, such as a spring, a stream, a river, or the ocean. Saltwater can also be used to charge an object. These elemental chargings will feel different from the sunlight or moonlight, but they may be more appropriate for your purposes.

A charged object will last anywhere from a few days to a couple of months. It all depends on how often you use the energy. When an object is charged, it will feel full of energy, as if it has the ability to give you power. You'll notice that you want to pay attention to the object due to the energy differential. It will appear more interesting and beautiful. When the energy has been used up, the object will appear dull, and the energy will feel low. You won't want to touch it or be near it. Check in with your charged object to figure out how much energy it has left in it. When in doubt, recharge.

Enchanting Objects and Making Charms

Enchanting or charming an object is sort of like charging it, but instead of using the natural world's energy, you use willpower as the magical action to raise the energy of the item and infuse it with meaning. The words *enchant* and *charm* come from the Latin *incantare* ("to sing") and *carmen* ("song"). You don't have to sing to create a charmed or enchanted object, but the implication is clear—when we give an object our energy and will, we enliven it with deeper meaning. Wedding rings are a great example of enchanted objects. There's a huge ceremony with a holy person, people being married, and family and friends who all give energy and will toward them as the rings are placed on people's hands to denote a voluntary agreement. The deeper meaning of wedding rings is clear: it's all about love and union.

Almost anything can be charmed or enchanted. External representations of your will are sometimes the best items to be enchanted. For example, you

could enchant a love goddess statue with the gracious powers associated with her, charm a garden gnome to protect your garden, or enchant your moon tattoo to give you greater intuition. Some of the best things to enchant are the ones you use every day, such as your jewelry, glasses, phone, and wallet. You can work with the intentions and goals such as love, wealth, mental acuity, a sense of community, spiritual empowerment, or anything else you might desire.

Before enchanting an object, cleanse it. Charge the object to further enhance its power. When you're ready to begin, cast a circle. State your will: for example, "I create this object to be a luck magnet. It draws luck to me every single day." Hold the item in your hands or close to your body. Feel the nature of the object and its internal alignment; get into its heart and mind. Merge with it for a moment, then focus on your will for the object. Feel the object begin to take on your will, with every curve or hard angle, with everything it is made of, and with every color it has. Intensify your breathing and blow on the object, reciting your will or spell. Sing, dance, or raise energy some other way, such as anointing the object with essential oil. When the energy peaks, focus all your will into the object and speak your will or spell one last time. The item will be charged with your intended energy. It may need to be refreshed from time to time, especially if you use it regularly or wear it daily, such as a pendant. Recharging a charmed object is easy and can happen without a formal ritual. Simply hold it close and remember the ritual that enchanted it. Feel your energies merge again.

Other items that may be enchanted include food and drink. Some practitioners bless these near the end of a ritual so they can enjoy consuming the fruits of their magic. This is particularly effective for group rituals and ceremonies.

Sigils

Sigils are like symbols taken to the next level. They're part art, part symbol, part charmed object, and part mystery. The beauty of them is that no one knows exactly what they mean unless you tell them. They can have all kinds of complicated meanings, such as mental prowess, beauty, strength, or sovereignty. The magical action in this case lies with imbuing the sigil with personal energy and will, and also the artistry during the creation of the sigil.

There are a few different ways to create a sigil. You could free-draw something, either consciously or in a trance state. Some people write out a phrase and use the first letter of each word to create something. Other people use recognizable symbols, like arrows, dots, circles, stars, and other shapes. My favorite way to create a sigil is to use all the methods intuitively, combining letters, numbers, and symbols to create something personal and syncretic. For example, a sigil for concentration might begin with a Mars symbol for action, but the arrow could be vertical and longer to represent higher focus. Accompanying vertical lines on the side embolden the focused feeling. Last, to make it more personal, a simplified letter of your first name could go somewhere. Remove any extraneous lines to make the sigil more iconic and mysterious to outsiders.

Figure 3: Sigil of Concentration

Something changes when we create a sigil with meaning. It becomes more than just lines, circles, and symbols—it takes on a life. A sigil is finished when it feels right. Redraw the sigil or trace it with your finger to recharge it. You can also draw it on your skin with lotion or oil to charge yourself with the meaning.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

Using Intuition to Create an Aromatherapy Concoction

Stefanie Palmer

To use your intuition to create an essential oil blend, place vials of essential oils before you, then state your intention. Enter a meditative state and ask for guidance in a way that feels comfortable to you. Feel the energy of the oils, noting which ones you're drawn to in accordance with your intention. Each essential oil has its own inherent nature and vibration amid a myriad of healing

qualities. It's important to honor and respect these precious gifts of the earth that give us the ability to heal ourselves. Tune in to each oil you're considering and make your selections. Note whether you're seeking a higher frequency or a grounding frequency.

Once you have an assortment of oils, smell them and hold the vials in your hands to determine if they're good fits for your concoction. This is a good way to narrow down your choices if you feel you have too many. Listen intently with an open heart and mind.

After you've made your final decision, place an empty bottle in front of you. Again, tune in to your intention and to the frequencies of the oils. Drop by drop, add each oil into the bottle, making notes along the way with the name and quantity. Smell the aroma. Feel the energy and vibration of your finished creation. You'll know if you need to adjust anything. Trust your intuition.

If possible, let the blend sit for several weeks. The married aromas will smell much different from when they are first mixed. After mixing your concoction, dilute your essential oils appropriately so that they're safe for everyday or ritual use. You can also add synergy by incorporating gemstones, crystals, flower essences, color therapy, astrology, or reiki energy. This alchemy results in a truly holistic and intuitive aromatherapy concoction.

• • •

RITUAL

CREATING A HOME WARD

Every witch should have a home ward, or a magical object to protect their home from anything that does not serve their highest good. To make your own home protection, you can charm an object, create a spell jar, or use a sigil. If you're creating a spell jar, consider using personal correspondences such as plants you grew in your yard, soil from just outside your home, herbs and spices from your cupboard, and anything else that feels protective. Use the magical action of putting your energy and will into the object. If you're using a sigil, trace it over your doors, windows, and floors. If you wish to charm an object, find something that looks commonplace that you can leave outside the home, such as a statuette of a rabbit. Consecrate your home ward in a ritual, then place it wherever your intuition guides you.

Magical Cloaks

Whether you want to get through the grocery store relatively unseen or sparkle like sunlight on water, you could use a magical cloak. They can give you more of whatever you need, including privacy, protection, or fanfare. They help by giving you a mental image and boundaries for your energy.

Casting a magical cloak is almost like casting a miniature circle around yourself. Close your eyes and imagine raising your more powerful hand high above your head—for most people, that's the dominant hand. Imagine slowly drawing a wide circle over your body and head, pulling a bunch of fabric over you as you do so. I use a clockwise motion to put one on and a widdershins motion to remove it. Consider the thickness of the fabric and the transparency for your purposes. A thicker, darker cloak usually repels energy, while a lighter, transparent one attracts people.

The more you practice casting cloaks and crowns, the longer you can maintain them, and the more powerful they will be. Be aware that they take a certain amount of energy to put up and maintain. Before casting them, ensure that your physical, emotional, and mental energetic states are stable so you don't run out of energy. Recognize when you can no longer maintain them, and take them down consciously. Just like a rechargeable battery, it's better to remove the cloak if you still have a little charge left rather than letting yourself run out completely. Save some of your energy for yourself and for anything else you need to accomplish.

Here are the various types of magical cloaks and their purposes.

Protection Cloak

As an empath, a protective cloak was the first one I ever cast, and it remains one of my favorites. On days when I need separation from the world, I cast a cozy, dark protection cloak over myself that makes me feel like I'm wearing a blanket. My favorite colors for protective cloaks are black, dark blue, gray, and brown. These dark colors are great for keeping hidden and for making a barrier between you and the outside world.

Blending In or Reflecting Energy Back Cloak

Cast a dirty brown or dull gray cloak to blend into the background, or match whatever color is around you the most. You can also play with casting a mirror

cloak. Its shiny surface reflects energy away from you and makes people avert their eyes.

Energy-Filtering Cloak

A transparent or semipermeable cloak can let you get by without much notice, but it still lets your energy be detected by the right people. You'll be visible and let in some energy, but not all. An energy-filtering cloak is especially handy if you're searching for someone in a crowded area or if you want to make a new friend, but not just anyone. Transparent or pastel colors are nice for these, including light blue, pastel purple, and spring green.

Glamor Cloak

When I want to appear vibrant and be noticed, I wear a glamor cloak. This is helpful when you're trying to meet someone, if you're putting on a show, or if you just want to sparkle and shine. Maybe it's your birthday, or perhaps you're getting married. Or, you might just want some extra zip. This kind of cloak is helpful if you're doing something public like appearing as a public figure, giving a presentation, or leading a ritual.

One of my favorite glamor cloaks is translucent with sparkling silver energy, which looks like glitter or light. You could also go for transparent cloaks in bold colors such as white, titanium, gold, silver, bronze, or copper. A transparent rainbow cloak would be particularly awesome for a pride parade.

Power Cloak

You could draw a bold, powerful cloak to summon authority and help you draw the right kind of attention. Reds, oranges, and metallic colors command attention and give the wearer a fierce aura, but you can use any color that makes you feel powerful. These can be transparent or solid.

Layered Cloaks

To layer your intentions, draw two cloaks over yourself. For example, you could cast a strengthening cloak and then a protection cloak over it. For ultimate shielding, cast a protection cloak and then cast a mirror cloak over it.

Other Magical Clothing

Cloaks are not the only magical clothing you can wear. You can also wear energetic crowns in a similar manner as you did with the cloak. Ethereal crowns are especially helpful for glamor or power. These magical adornments can alight your crown chakra and elevate that aspect of yourself.

When Your Magic Doesn't Work

There'll be times when your magic doesn't work. You may feel lost in the wild woods, with your intuition spinning you in circles, not knowing which way to go. The canopy of tree branches could become so dense that you might not be able to tell if it's night or day. Times like these, you often can't catch a break, much less celebrate. Worst of all, there are times when nothing you do will fix the situation, try as you might.

When your magic doesn't work and your intuition is ephemeral, go back to the basics. Cut out whatever is distracting you, including toxic people, poor food choices, stagnation, intoxicants, and anything else that needs to go. Move your body and cleanse your energy. Double-check your intuition. What's your gut really saying? Don't be afraid to get real. Page back in your book of shadows and evaluate your spiritual work. Did you manifest this by accident, or is this just a crapshoot from life?

Shortly after I manifested the enormous red feather at the Renaissance faire parking lot, I felt as if my ability to manifest died. My job at the faire was over, and I needed a new job, but I couldn't find one. Every week, I sent several applications in and did the magical work, but I never heard back. After a few weeks with nothing changing, I tried to bargain with the powers that be. I donated items to charities and followed the signs. I did whatever I thought the gods and spirits wanted from me. Still, nothing happened. With no income, I started to feel despondent.

What I should've realized at that time is that things don't always happen immediately. Windows of availability are only open at certain times. Sometimes, several other things have to happen before our will can be made manifest. We can't see all the steps that lead us to our desires. Our paths may be circuitous or vertical. The path may even be a still point for several days, weeks, months, or years. There are simply times when we pull the Hanged Man tarot card,

and we have no choice but to lie low. This may seem counterproductive, but stillness is a natural part of life. Most times, the faster we surrender to it, the sooner it'll be over.

I gave up, and then something very different appeared in my life. An opportunity was presented to me. I was offered the chance to travel across the country while performing with fire. My answer was a resounding yes! My path forward ended up being something I never could've foreseen, but it was the perfect fit for what I truly wanted from life—an adventure.

If you ever feel lost on your own aimless path, this may be an indication of a time of tremendous change about to occur in your life. If you can't see where you're going, hang in there. Check in with your energy on a regular basis. Try new things and have new experiences. Go wherever your heart leads you. You may want to reach out to a friend or a professional for a reading to give you insight. Or an energetic healing might help move any stuck energy. Healers, readers, and psychics can help you climb the trees of the wild woods and get some perspective. With a bird's eye view, you can see where you've been, where you are, and maybe even the path ahead.

Something else you may want to consider is breaking down a big goal into smaller, more easily attainable pieces. For example, if you want to have a grade point average of 3.5, don't just have a single ritual to get you to there. Do practices and rituals to help you concentrate more, to help you prioritize studying and homework, to help you get to class on time, and to keep calm when taking a test. The 3.5 grade point average will be supported by all those miniature practices, and you'll have learned more life skills along the way.

Overall, keep doing the work. With patience, gratitude, transcendence, and surrender, we can find our paths through troubling times.

Commemorating Your Growth

When we take the time to create what we desire, our practices glow with power. We become radiant as well and live life on a more intrinsic level. We're able to see ourselves more clearly and create more of the lives we want.

Whenever you've manifested something or made some kind of magic happen, you should celebrate, no matter how small the victory. Honor yourself and this wonderful stage. Thank your ancestors, deities, or guides for assisting you with your goals. Open your book of shadows and read what you did that

worked. Put a star next to it and write a follow-up entry about your success. Think about what you want to do next, and plan ahead for your next ritual.

If your magic worked, I recommend that you celebrate by giving yourself a secret name or title to mark these wonderful new changes within yourself. Doing so can change so much about your energetic signature. It can empower you and lift you up to new heights. This secret name or title can bestow greater spiritual powers too. If it's a title, it should be a powerful one, such as priestess, priest, sorcerer, magician, mystic, or witch. Unless you're a leader of an intuitive witchcraft coven, it's not appropriate to give yourself a title such as "high priestess," or anything else like that. Instead, just be yourself and let your presence and energy speak for itself.

Consider this ritual an unblocking and unlocking initiation for you. This is your chance to respond to the call you heard earlier from the enchanted forest. Answer the call with your new name, title, and sense of self. I find it empowering to know that I'm a priestess of intuitive witchcraft. What's your title?

RITUAL

SELF-INITIATION

Create a ritual to initiate yourself with a new name, title, or both. Find personal correspondences that are energetically similar to whatever you aspire to, be that a deity, an herb, a song, an emotion, an oil, a color, or anything else that rings true. Create a secret name for yourself or a title. Plan on creating something using a simple intuitive ritual to commemorate this time. Use your intuition to create something that resonates with you. This could be a sigil, an enchanted object or piece of jewelry, a spell jar, or any other magic.

Start the ritual by casting a circle in the manner you prefer. When it comes time to invite spirits, invite your higher self to the ritual. Raise energy any other way that feels natural. Chant your secret name or title, either out loud or in your mind.

Craft your special object with concentration. When the energy peaks, take it into your body and aura. Weave the higher energy with your own energy. Take the higher energy into your magnetic field and accept it. Let your magical object absorb it as well.

When it feels right, touch your fingertips to your heart, then speak your new name and title with confidence. Repeat the words until you feel them resonate as the truth throughout your body. Meditate on this feeling, basking in your new glowing, magnetic energy. End the ritual by giving yourself a hug, then release your higher self and open the circle. Practice postritual care and write down what happened in your book of shadows. Come back to this feeling by using the sigil, enchanted object, or jar. Recharge it whenever the energy feels low. This object can be kept on your personal altar to help you feel empowered.

Further Reading List

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Chapter 5

Intuitive Practices and Rituals

Intuitive practices and rituals are excellent ways to cultivate a magical life. These acts bring together all the intuition, information about energy, and energy-changing skills from the previous chapters so you can build your personal spirituality. Practices and rituals are time-honored ways to home in on the life you really want.

Practices could be defined as single-focused acts or small bits of magic. They affect your personal energy, but don't affect the world as much, except in how your energy passively ripples through it. Practices are already a part of your daily life. Everything from your morning cup of coffee to your nightly habit of reading a book is a mundane practice. Habits like these carry personal meaning or help you feel grounded and balanced. Magical practices could include something like drawing a tarot card every morning or taking a magical bath once a week. These acts could be thought of as "everyday magics" and don't require a circle or protection.

On the other hand, rituals are generally defined as bigger, more formal ways to create changes in yourself and the external world. They're better methods to encounter the gods, work with spirits, and perform "big magic." Common mundane rituals include weddings, birthday celebrations, and college graduations. Magical rituals include celebrating the full moon or the summer solstice, for instance.

The mundane aspects of our lives don't have to limit us. We can bring consciousness to every moment, enhance them with energy, and take them to the

next level. Your morning cup of coffee can become magical. Your wedding ritual could use magical elements as well as mundane ones. It's all about seizing moments of opportunity and using them for your best interest. Every day we have opportunities to make our lives more magical. It's not hard. It merely takes a bit of conscious effort.

In my opinion, practice and ritual are the best ways to make you more proficient and elevate you to a higher level. When a challenge inevitably arises, a well-practiced witch will be prepared and adept and may even be more calm and centered. Just like exercise or yoga, our magical muscles must be worked regularly in order to perform when we want them to. In other words, the more we practice and have ritual, the easier we can access those energies. Doing practices and rituals regularly reinforces our neural pathways, which lets us channel spiritual energy easier.

Just about every witch and pagan uses their intuition in practice and ritual. No matter what path they're on, they access their inner knowing when deciding what kind of spiritual work to do, what day to do it on, what practices and magics should be involved, and so on. They blend their intuition with any other path they use, making their magic both linear and dynamic. This chapter aims to give you some ideas for daily practices and rituals to spark true magic in your life.

Intuitive Morning Practice

I'm not a morning person, but I love my morning intuitive practice. I never skip it, if I can help it. Connecting to my spiritual life in the wee hours of the morning helps me transition from the dream world into the physical world. My morning practice lets my intuitive self feel honored and welcomed. It also sets my tone for the day.

A morning practice is the perfect time to invite a magical consciousness into your day. If you don't do it then, at your earliest moments, when will you do it? Will you even do it at all, or will you just rush from one place to the next?

Here's a snapshot of my basic morning ritual: Every morning I wake up a little earlier than I need to and stretch while the coffee is brewing. After the coffee is made, I sit at my main altar with a cat or two. Taking deep breaths, I center my energy, align my chakras, and draw a few tarot cards. I usually pick one card for my internal energy of the day, another for the external energy of the

day, another for the projects I plan to work on that day, and a final one to serve as a message from the spirits or the gods. Let your intuition guide you about what questions to ask about your day and how many cards you need to draw.

Next, I like to read the statement of will I wrote from my most recent new moon ritual. I hold that energetic feeling in a meditation for a short while and focus on feeling it physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Resonating with it every morning rekindles the desire, the realizations, and the feelings from the ritual. It reinforces its power and realigns me to my will. After being reminded of my priorities, I can start my day with purpose.

I follow my intuition about what to do next. Most mornings, I anoint myself with essential oils diluted in a carrier oil. I wear the ones based on either how I feel or how I want to feel. For example, if I'm already feeling wonderful, I'll choose an oil to lift me even higher, like ylang-ylang. But if I have low energy, I'll use a mood booster such as pine or lavender. I apply the oils onto my body according to intuition. Sometimes, I put them in nontraditional places, like my heart, belly, ankles, the back of my neck, my throat, temples, and even my third eye. Before stepping away, I inhale the oils deeply and feel the shift of energy. (If you're new to essential oils, use them sparingly until you're certain you don't have an allergic reaction.)

Another intuitive practice can be choosing clothing for the day. When looking at your closet or dresser, think about your emotions, your tasks for the day, and the weather. For me, the colors I wear correspond with my emotions. If I feel open, I wear bright colors and patterns, like robin's egg blue or coral. If I feel the need to protect myself, I choose darker tones, like black, magenta, and chocolate. Your color associations may be different from mine. Perhaps you associate white or purple with protection. As much as possible, intuitively choose the colors and fabrics you'll wear. After all, you'll be wearing them all day. You might as well love what you're wearing.

Next, I select my jewelry and gemstones. My jewelry doesn't have to match my outfit—it's more important that it's true to my energy and intuition. These can include charmed objects; pocket stones; visible objects, such as a pendant; or objects hidden from sight, such as a stone or a crystal I wear in my bra.

Every day when I step out of my house and into the world, I take a moment to look up at the sky and really feel the weather and temperature. There's something about taking in the energy of the trees, the birds, and the other

plants just outside my back door. It helps me feel grounded in the magical world just outside of my home.

There are thousands of other things you could do in the morning to make it more magical and intuitive. You could draw sigils on yourself using natural substances such as vanilla extract, coffee, tea, or essential oils. Maybe you'll stir your tea or coffee with intent and imagine extra energy going into it. You could recite a recent spell or meditate. Maybe you'll want to pause for a moment in front of an altar or connect with a deity. You could turn on some music and dance—this is one of my favorite morning routines if I have time. Lighting a candle, walking in nature, reading magical books, and writing are all excellent ways to start the day. These practices should occur after you center yourself. They should also be performed at your own pace and with intent. If you're not a morning person, you may want to write down a coffee spell or a will-to-wakeup statement the night before, so you'll have the added focus when you need it. Explore what feels right and do whatever you feel will assist you on your path. If performed well, these morning intuitive practices will start your day off magically.

Intuitive Night Practice

Nighttime is my favorite time. It's when my biorhythm peaks and I feel more energized. When the sun sets, I'm more in touch with the powerful aspects of myself, and I can command a lot of energy with ease. Because of that, nighttime is the best time for my practices and rituals.

My intuitive nightly practice helps me relax after the long day and lets me enjoy the energies of the night. I give myself an hour or so to wind down slowly, with intent. One of my favorite night practices is to take a walk. Dusk and the hours following are especially beautiful times to get outside, as there are fewer people and vehicles on the road. At night, the world seems to come alive in a different way. Bats wheel overhead, and plants nod in the cool breeze. The world seems more relaxed and reflective, as if it's offering up its secrets. It encourages me to feel open too and explore the more hidden parts of myself.

Another great night practice is making a cup of tea with herbs that are in accordance with my intentions or goals. I like to cup my hands over the steeping tea and let the steam warm my hands. I feel the energy come off it and consciously align with it. Then, I bring my hands to my face and wash my cheeks,

forehead, and temples with the steam and intention. I love to bring tea into the bedroom, get under the covers, and crack open a good book. My nightstand has piles of magical and psychological books. Every night, I intuitively choose which one I feel like reading. The book often contains messages or information that's relevant to my day or the day to come. Sometimes, I make notes in my journal or just reflect on the passages that were meaningful.

Intuitive night practices can also contain other magical aspects, such as lighting a candle and reciting a few words to plant seeds for good dreams. Or maybe you'd prefer meditation or attempt to astrally project. A bath with herbs, oils, and salts is lovely and can be just the thing to transition you into dreamland. Nighttime can also be a great time for tarot and divination. Whatever you choose, let your practice match your desired energy.

Other Intuitive Practices

Free Time

When you need to reconnect with yourself, there's nothing like taking time off from absolutely everything. Every free day is an intuitive adventure. Maybe you need to rest on the sofa with a dog all day. Or perhaps you'll read a book, listen to music, dance, take a walk in nature, and stretch. You never know what'll happen until you give yourself the freedom to explore.

Start with no expectations. Ground in your body and take deep breaths. Let any tension in your body start to unravel. Listen to your body, and then do what comes naturally. Move intuitively. Eat intuitively. Think the thoughts you need to think. Feel your feelings. Witness anything that comes up. With days like these, you're free to really connect with yourself. Connecting with your intuition on free days helps you take care of your energy and your health. They may help you find deeper meaning in a busy modern life too. When you eventually return to work, you'll be more refreshed and ready to tackle your projects.

Practice to Ground, Cleanse, and Realign

Everyone needs to go to places with low and medium energy, such as the bank, the grocery store, and possibly your workplace. At these places, we mingle with all kinds of people, sometimes for long periods of time. You may want to have a practice that shifts your energy from the closed-off, medium-level-only

version of you that works in those situations to the freer, more expansive version of your atmosphere. Having an energetic shift practice like this can really demarcate your roles and energy attachments from one place to another.

Whenever you need to reorient yourself, practice what I call ground, cleanse, and realign, or GCR for short.

First, ground. One of the best ways to do this is by making yourself more present. Become more aware of the present moment and focus on your surroundings. Look around at the room you're in; or if you're outside, pay attention to the sun, the wind, and the weather. Take your time with your tasks, or take a break entirely. If you're walking somewhere, feel free to go a little slower than usual to go at your own pace. You can even pretend to search for something in your pockets until you feel more settled and connected to the earth. If you drive, after you get into your vehicle, take another moment to look around and take in your surroundings before starting it up.

You can also ground into your body as well. You could have a meal or a snack, or take a few deep breaths. Saying something like "here I am, standing in the supermarket, looking at the bananas" can bring you back into your body and into the present moment. If possible, subtly touch a part of your body or get a hug from someone. Touch the earth, or take off your shoes and walk barefoot. Depending on where you are and how much you want to ground, you may even want to lie down and close your eyes. If it's helpful, you could visualize energetic roots from your body that connect you to the earth. Allow any energy that isn't yours to flow away from you and fall to the ground.

The next step, cleansing, can be accomplished in many different ways. If you have access to music, play something that makes you feel more like yourself. Really feel it, letting the music wash over you and cleanse you of your feelings. You can dab a little essential oil on your pulse points and inhale the scent. Dancing and moving are good cleansers as well. Washing your hands can also help you wash off the energy, even if it's just with hand sanitizer. Other cleansing practices could include a quick meditation, burning herbs or incense, or the ringing of a chime.

Once you're grounded and cleansed, realign your energy to be more like that of your own atmosphere. Realignment can take many forms, including conscious breath work, meditation, energy work, posture correction, chakra awareness, opening up your energy, recalling your atmosphere to you, or rais-

ing energy. A quick way to realign is to call upon your higher self or remember your initiation title or name. You could even read a little bit of an inspiring book to bring you back into your best insightful self.

This GCR triage could take you a few seconds, several minutes, or an entire day, depending on how much energy you need to shake off. Try to find a practice that combines all three activities or one that lets you transition between them naturally. For me, one of the best ways to do this is to make tea. Everything about it is intuitive and magical. The simple process of boiling the water, choosing the perfect cup, picking out a combination of herbs or tea, steeping it, waiting for it to brew, and finally drinking it is a complex energetic practice in and of itself. Combining the three GCR magics into one sequential magical process is a great way to transition you from a state of low or medium energy into a relaxed, effusive atmosphere. It's possible that you won't need to do this every time you visit a medium-energy place, and you might not need it for some of those places, but it's nice to have a few tricks up your sleeve, just in case.

Other Intuitive Practices

Don't let this list of practices limit you. Almost anything can be a magical practice. If there are any other regular activities you'd like to incorporate on a daily basis, such as communicating with spirits, meditation, or working with earth energy in your garden, include them as a daily practice. Make the most of your moments to carve meaning in your everyday activities.

EXERCISE
YOUR OWN INTUITIVE MORNING OR NIGHT PRACTICE

Start an intuitive witchcraft practice for your mornings and nights. Try any of the ideas mentioned in this section. Do whatever you need in the moment and whatever will feel helpful for the rest of your day. If something doesn't work, experiment with the other ideas in this chapter.

Intuitive Magical Rituals

Rituals are the perfect ways to change something, internally or externally. If you're seeking clarity or if you need a mood shift, a good ritual can clear out the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual cobwebs unlike anything else.

While you could look for rituals online or in any number of books, it can be extremely satisfying to make up a ritual all by yourself. After all, those rituals online and in books were written by someone else who made them up. Designing your own intuitive ritual can be an extremely rewarding experience. When it's performed well, you'll feel a shift in your energy and a change in the world. All you need is a little confidence and experience in basic intuitive witchcraft.

Whenever you feel called to perform an intuitive ritual, evaluate all your internal energies. Where are you lacking? What's hurting? What do you want to expand? What energy needs to go away or transform? Write down your feelings in your journal or book of shadows to get a clear understanding of what you want. When you determine what you want, write down your will. If you wish, you can translate it into a spell.

The next step is to determine what you have available to work with. Look in your cupboards, spice rack, tea shelf, refrigerator, and craft box. What items could represent the situation or your will? For example, an ugly yellow candle could represent the self-doubt you wish to banish.

Consider what magical action would support your intended outcome with these ingredients. You could use any of the simple intuitive magics in chapter 4 or design something yourself with what you have on hand. You can drink this water and feel recharged, make a spell jar with it, use it to water your plants, or refill your fountain, if you have one. There are also harming or banishing magical actions, such as burning, cutting, smashing, or stabbing. The yellow candle, representing self-doubt, could be burned to a stub and ceremoniously thrown out with the trash. You could also use transformative magical actions, such as changing something's color or energy. An example of this could include rubbing the yellow candle in your favorite essential oil and coating it with cinnamon, which is usually a positive correspondence for most people. Burning that modified candle will sweeten your self-doubt by transforming the energy.

To prepare for an intuitive ritual, collect all the materials you'll need in the room or space you'll be using. Perform the usual preparations, including cleansing of yourself and the space, meditating, and setting the tone of the space with lighting, music, and incense. Cast a circle if you need a container for your energy work. Center and align your energy. Hold space for yourself and your need. When you feel ready, speak aloud your will or spell with energy. Raise the energy using one of the methods in chapter 4.

When the energy is higher, perform the magical action designed to bring the change you wish to see with conscious energy. State what you're doing if you feel that helps: for example, "As this candle burns, my self-doubt is leaving me. With every moment, I feel it drawing further away from me."

Do whatever you feel is right. It's up to you to alchemize or change whatever you wish through this ritual. When the energy has been transformed, send it into the object, yourself, or into the world. Feel the change resonate deep within you. Give thanks and close the circle (if applicable). Practice self-care afterward by grounding with food and rest.

Astronomical Rituals

Science has taught us many things about the world and astronomy, but it has also taken away some of the wonder of the natural world. As we learned in chapter 1, we can accept two seemingly contradicting different viewpoints—both the magical and the scientific. We can accept what physics tells us, that starlight travels millions of miles to reach us *and* still be in awe of the twinkling stars. The moon can be a large rock that orbits the earth *and* it can be a luminous celestial body with mystical energy and light with a cycle that mimics some women's moon cycles. The sun can be a fiery sphere of gas that provides light and warmth *and* the powerful entity that provides the perfect conditions for life on Earth. Rekindle your sense of wonder about the natural world by feeling the majesty and poetry of the heavenly bodies. Fall in love with the cycles of the moon, the sun, and the earth to really feel the energy of each present moment.

While you could have a practice or a ritual anytime, if there's a dark moon or a solstice coming up, you may want to wait until that time. Many people believe that these "holidays" are significant. Our ancestors probably observed many of these days or times of the year. It certainly doesn't hurt to have the added energy of the celestial bodies and possibly our ancestors in our magical rites. Let's delve into the different positions of the moon and the sun and what they mean for us.

Lunar Rituals

The moon's cycle around the earth, at about 29.5 days, is similar to some women's cycles. As such, the moon is often associated with feminine energy; however,

that shouldn't limit your thinking about it. It's not actually gendered, and it can be a part of anyone's practice. Some cultures had masculine moon deities, so you can use whatever meaning you wish with it.

Every fifteen days or so, the positions of the dark moon and full moon create a gravitational pull on the oceans so great that the tidal bulges can be seen from outer space. If you live close to a large body of water, you can witness the tides rising and falling. The moon pulls on our bodies as well, but the effects are very subtle—in the emotional, mental, and spiritual energy ranges. That's why dark moons and full moons are excellent times for energy work—because we're already feeling slightly altered by the pull of something greater than ourselves.

The moon drifts through the sky, showing different faces and phases; rotating around the earth at its own perfect pace. Although it appears to wax and wane, it obviously doesn't get larger and smaller. Its light waxes and wanes, as well as its darkness, or the part that's in the Earth's shadow. A gibbous moon may look like a bulging, luminous eye or egg, but it also holds a black crescent as well. When considering the moon's phases, think about the amount of light and what's clear and out in the open in your life, as well as the amount of shadow and what's being hidden in the shadow for you. Respecting both parts of the moon—that which is light and that which is shadow—will clue you in to many of its mysteries.

Moon magic could generally be broken into two 14.8-day cycles. When the moon's light is waxing, we see growth of our goals and desires. The waning moon cycle is thought to be a time of refining and cutting back. The timings of moonrise and moonset can be compared to our own schedules as well. The moon is visible for about twelve hours a day. If you awaken around sunrise, you're on schedule with the new moonrise. If you do magical work at noon, you're working with the rise of the first quarter moon. Working magic at the moment the full moon rises means you'll also get some sunset magic as well, and midnight is the special time of the last quarter moonrise. Whenever the moon shines down upon us, it assists us. When it shines during the day, our magic and work are in alignment with the moon and sun, and the work is out in the open. When the moon is out at night, it's working behind the scenes, illuminating that which is hidden from the sun and ourselves. Dreamwork and the subconscious become more important.

Knowing the phases and positions of the sun and moon can be helpful, but don't let them limit your work. You don't have to wait for the exact phase or position. If you wish, you can manifest on the waning moon and banish on the waxing moon. If you need to perform a certain kind of magic and your will is strong enough, the moon's energy won't halt your progress; it will help if it can, however it can.

Consider tracking how you feel at the different moon phases. Write down the phases in your book of shadows, and over three months or so, record your general emotions, strengths, and weaknesses at each phase. With time, you may see a pattern of energy or emotions that you can use in your magical rituals.

The moon doesn't have to be visible to you in order to work with it, but if moonlight is a part of your magic, you should know what time the moon rises. Approximate times of moonrise and moonset have been used in this section. If you need the exact times, use the internet to look them up.

Dark Moon

The dark moon is the moment of total darkness, when the moon slips between the sun and the earth. Most people call this the new moon, but I prefer to differentiate this moment from the moment that the moon is actually "new," or in a new cycle. Although the dark moon and the new moon are separated by mere seconds, there are different magical associations with each.

During dark moons, the sun and moon are closer together, which magnifies their pull on the earth from one direction. With this massive celestial alignment, we can more easily align ourselves internally as well during the dark moon. It's the ideal time to be in the void, to meditate, to be between the worlds, or to do trance work. Shadow work is also favored at this time, as there is no shadow if there is no light. Take a moment during this time to be still and listen. Look within and search your soul to observe the lessons of the dark moon. Check an astrolabe or the internet for the exact moment of the dark moon.

New Moon

The dark moon is reborn into its new cycle as a silver sickle—as a new moon. When the moon is the tiniest sliver of a crescent, feel new energy burst forth.

You can start something fresh at this time, as a new cycle is born. Set an intention and goals and give them love and life. You may wish to write them down and read them as part of your morning practice for the remainder of the moon cycle. You may also wish to draw tarot cards and leave them on your altar until the full moon. During this time, many witches manifest their desires, begin new projects, create spell jars, and ask for otherworldly assistance. They also work with their favorite deities, spirit guides, ancestors, and their beloved dead.

New moons rise at sunrise and set in the evening. The new moon matches most people's daily schedules, and it works when we work.

Waxing Crescent Moon

The crescent moon asks us to trust the magic we performed at the new moon. This moon phase "sleeps in," rising around 9 to 10 a.m., and stays with us throughout our day, assisting with our magic before it disappears from view around 9 to 10 p.m. It looks like the curve in a D—you can remember this if you think of the words *daring*, *doing*, and *drawing toward me*. This moon is all about trust, meditation, and checking on the seed that was planted in the subconscious on the new moon ritual. Rest easy and resonate at the frequency of your desire.

First Quarter Waxing Moon

About a week after the dark moon, the moon enters the first quarter phase, which looks like a half-circle. Just like an employee who works second shift, this moon rises around noon and sets around midnight, staying with us through the full light of the day and into the darkness. The first quarter waxing moon indicates the perfect time to take action to make your intentions and goals from the new moon a reality. Your new moon ritual is about a week old at the point, and the energy has had time to simmer in the universe. Explore your options, focus, plan, be creative, and contact people. Above all, do the work. Make things happen. Draw people to you. Any chances taken around this time are favored. Magical workings can include attraction and energetic alignments. Recite your intentions and goals and trust that they will be fulfilled. Rocket your goal into higher gear. Go the extra mile. Perform additional manifestations and make your dream a reality.

Gibbous Moon

The gibbous moon looks oblong, much like an egg floating in the sky. Like an egg, it's full of potential. The moon's light is increasing in this time. Things are "coming to light" regarding your will. What's developing from the actions you took at the first quarter moon? What's coming to life? Keep the momentum going if you can, though it's also okay to let the egg incubate. This moon phase rises around 3 p.m. and is up late into the night, setting around 3 a.m.

Full Moon

A full moon occurs when the earth is between the sun and the moon. If you were to see it from space, you'd see the moon and sun at opposite ends of the earth, each pulling on the oceans. At this time, the moon's entire cratered surface is visible, and it is the time of the most moonlight. The full moon rises in the evening at sunset and is up all night, shining on your dreams and revealing that which was hidden to you before setting at sunrise. The full moon is on an opposite schedule compared to the sun. You may feel some dissonance at this point, as the gravity of the moon and the sun are subtly pulling us in two different directions.

On full moons, whatever we manifested at the new moon will show up. We'll become conscious of wins, losses, and also the unexpected. If something went wrong, look in your book of shadows and read what you did for the new moon. Was your message clear enough? Did anything get misinterpreted? What worked, and what surprised you? Celebrate what you manifested, and release whatever you don't like or whatever is holding you back. Fresh tarot cards may be drawn for the altars to clarify any confusion. You may want to rewrite your new moon statement of will to redefine your intent.

The full moon is the perfect time to celebrate and give gratitude for the gifts given to us from our new moon rituals. The energy at this time is high, making it the perfect time to charge crystals, water, yourself, or any other object with the moon light. Your psychic abilities will be heightened at this time as well. Perform advanced magical practices such as scrying, trance work, otherworld journeying, or astral projection (more on those in the coming chapters). It's also a great time for higher energy rituals, the kind that require a lot of energy and magic.

Waning Gibbous Moon

Directly after the full moon, the shadow crescent grows stronger. The waning gibbous moon looks much like an eye in the sky. With every second, light is being carved away from it, making the eye appear to be suspicious or cautious. The critical eye is asking, "What's really going on? How do I really feel about these developments?" It tells us to wait and see. This moon rises around 10 p.m., stays up all night, and carries on into our days, making a brief morning appearance before getting sleepy and turning in around 10 a.m. At this time, focus within and "see" how much your life aligns with your goals.

Third or Last Quarter Moon

The third quarter moon, looking like a half-circle, rises around midnight. It illuminates the dark lands, moving through the unknown and working on the more mysterious aspects of our intentions and goals. It lingers in the sky, watching the sunrise and staying long enough to check in with your morning before clocking out around noon. It's time to take action with a revised approach using what you learned from the most recent "eye" moon phase. Refine your active approach, and keep working through your issues. Continue to reflect on any newly received information and how it affects your goals. Talk with others and offer solutions to any problems that have arisen. You're in the home stretch now. This can be a good time for healing, cleansing, gratitude, surrender, stopping the practice of bad habits, breaking curses, and letting go.

Waning Crescent Moon

The waning crescent moon is like the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland*—shining throughout the long night, from about 3 a.m., through the sleepy dawn, and into the afternoon, setting around 3 p.m. It looks like a C in the sky or a curved knife used to harvest herbs and other plants. Remember this moon phase with the words *cutting*, *changing*, and *carving*. Use this moon phase to perform magic for cutting away, releasing, or decreasing something's power. Uproot away any noxious plants from the wild woods of your mind, heart, and spirit. Cleanse. Remove anything that doesn't resonate with you so that you'll be able to start fresh once the dark moon happens again. See if you can manage a smile while you cut the negative parts away. If possible, feel a little gratitude for having the wisdom that those things don't serve you anymore.

Think about what you'll change about your next new moon ritual and what you'll manifest next.

Eclipse Rituals

Eclipses are magical times when the moon, sun, and earth are perfectly aligned. Other dark moons and full moons aren't perfectly aligned, as the moon's path travels to one side or another. Eclipses are thought to be even more special than regular full moons or dark moons because of the exactly opposite pull of the moon and the sun. Eclipses deal with long-range beginnings and endings, fresh starts, possible crises, eruption of emotions, memories or people from the past, patterns being formed or broken, spiritual alignment, and mind-body-spirit-emotion integration. Intuition and psychic abilities are heightened at this time. Any magic worked on an eclipse will carry on for at least six months afterward. Some people believe that eclipses are ominous times, but that's because the amount of energy that's available for use is so huge. With an eclipse, you can break free from the past and embrace a change for the better; or feel crushed by the weight of your past and every change you're resisting. Use your intuition to ascertain whether it's a good time for you to work magic with it or whether you need to just practice some loving self-care.

If you're unsure what to do for an eclipse, consult an astrologer or look up your astrological natal birth chart online to figure out where the sun and moon will be. Use this information to accentuate your usual work on the dark moons or full moons. For example, a solar eclipse in the fifth house could be about starting a revolutionary new creative project, while a lunar eclipse in the ninth house could be used to create a ritual to honor intuition and work with a new deity who has much to teach you. When in doubt, contact an astrologer.

Solar Rituals

The earth has a long rotation around the sun. It's about thirteen times longer than a moon cycle. The axial tilt of the earth creates a gradual shift of sunlight and warmth, which gives us the seasons. Solar rituals are celebrations of the sun's effect on the earth, and they celebrate both heavenly bodies. Our agrarian pagan ancestors lived by the sun's cycles more than most people do in our modern age. They planted in the spring, tended the fields all summer, harvested in the autumn, and rested and planned in the winter. Some planted a

hardy crop in the fall such as winter wheat or winter vegetables, too, but those crops were secondary to the main summer fields. Our agrarian ancestors were in touch with the earth because they worked it every day. Like our ancestors, when we observe and appreciate the relationship between the earth and the sun, it can remind us of our sacred connection with them.

While moon magic is preferred by some people, the balance of the sun and the earth is ultimately responsible for all life on the planet. The sun not only provides sunlight for photosynthesis, but it also creates the wind and ocean currents. As the Wheel of the Year turns, the earth changes, and we change with it. Like the sun and the earth, we also have longer cycles. These can include big projects, such as recording an album, rehearsing for a play, practicing for a show, writing a book, saving money for vacation, and having children.

Many witches celebrate the days when the sunlight is at its peak (the summer solstice) and the day when the sunlight is at its absolute minimum (the winter solstice). They also honor the points between them, called the equinoxes, in spring and autumn. Several witchcraft traditions have also adapted the cross-quarter days of the Celtic fire festivals, which occur between the solstices and equinoxes. All eight of these holidays are known as the *sabbats*. They could be thought of as spokes on the *Wheel of the Year*. The sabbats are festivals that honor the season and the times of the year. Many of them have been celebrated throughout the world and across time by different cultures, with different names and focuses. These days are all about working with the energy of the seasons. You can use that energy to assist you with your goals. For example, many introspective or internal magical works are practiced in the winter, when we're more shut in from the cold, and many people use the warmer months to work on their external, social goals.

To use the energy of the season, meld with the energy of the weather. Be outside and take it all in. Listen to the wind and feel it on your face. Feel the sun's warmth. Be aware of any animals out and about, and their activities. What color is the sunlight? Is it warm and buttery, or diffuse and cool? How strong is the sunlight? How warm? How long does the light last during the day? Be in the moment and relate to the weather. Can you think of how you relate to the earth in that moment? For example, if it's spring, in what way are you blooming? If it's autumn, what leaves are you shedding as winter approaches? If it's late summer, what are you harvesting?

The sabbats are good times to check in with ourselves. What were we doing at this time last year? Are we on track with our long-term goals? What progress have we made toward them? Observing the solar holidays can incentivize us to take action if we've fallen behind, giving us reasons to move ahead after setbacks. The Wheel of the Year turns. Why not pause on those special days to celebrate it?

This section contains the sabbats with their North American dates, as well as ideas about how to work with their energies. If you honor a certain tradition, do some research to find out what their version of the Wheel of the Year looked like.

Yule, Winter Solstice: December 20–23

Yule marks the shortest day and longest night of the year. It's the day that lies between the sun's decrease and increase. It's a dark, still point. Yule is often synonymous with Christmas, but it was originally a Norse holiday that celebrated the longest night and the shortest day. Many of the things we associate with the winter holidays have ancient pagan origins. For example, lights, greenery, holly, and giving gifts come from the Roman winter holiday Saturnalia. Modern witches celebrate Yule as the rebirth of the sun and the triumph of the light over the dark.

On this cold, chilly day, cleanse yourself and your home, releasing any old energy in order to start anew. Bring in a pine log or branch and enjoy its evergreen cheer and the aroma of pine sap. Try to walk in the woods around this time and have a feast, or treat yourself to a meal at one of your favorite restaurants. It's a good time for introspection and goals.

Imbolc, Winter Cross-Quarter Day: February 1 (Traditional) or February 3–4 (Astrological)

Imbolc is the name of the Irish holiday that celebrates the first day of spring. Even though snow and ice are sometimes present on this day, the amount of sunlight is growing, and the days are getting longer. The ancient Celts commemorated this time of the year as one of new life, as it was when sheep gave birth to their young. The word *Imbolc* may be related to the milk that flowed from their udders to feed their young.

This holiday honors the Celtic goddess Brigid, who is known as the goddess of healing, fertility, poetry, metalsmithing, and fire. Women at the Kildare temple in Ireland keep a flame burning for Brigid to honor her transformative powers. The tradition is rumored to have existed for centuries, as a pre-Christian tradition, and then later as a Christian tradition for Saint Brigid. Although the flame was extinguished in the sixteenth century, the Brigidine Sisters relit the flame in a ceremony in 1993, and it has been kept burning since that time.[16]

On Imbolc, the light is returning, but the warmth has not, and it's often the coldest of times. To celebrate Imbolc, one of the four fire festivals that mark the cross-quarter days, stoke the hearth and light the oven. Sweep out the house and cleanse it with herbs or resins. Cook some delicious food, light a candle, and ask Brigid for healing and her blessing. Trust in the mighty goddess to provide in this cold time. Have a feast to celebrate the waxing sun, and leave a little food for Brigid on your altar or hearth.

Ostara, Spring Equinox: March 20–21 or the Nearest Full Moon

The days and nights are equal at this point, and the sun's warmth is returning. The first flowers are generally seen around this time of year, including croci, daffodils, tulips, redwoods, apples, and cherry blossoms.

Ostara as a holiday is a relatively recent tradition. There was no known ancient pagan celebration at this time of the year, but, from the monk Bede, we know that Ostara or Eostre is the name of a Germanic goddess, and it's also the old name for the month of April.[17] Very little was written about the goddess Ostara, but she is thought to be a fertility and springtime goddess due to her association with this time of the year. The Norse love goddess Freya was also celebrated at this time.

To celebrate the spring equinox, set up an altar with local flowers, chocolate, eggs, and candles in spring flower colors (pastels or white). Do something that makes you feel the awakening of the earth and its newfound growth and love. Take a walk or go outside and breathe in the fresh air. Plant a few seeds

16. "The Perpetual Flame," Solas Bhríde Center and Hermitages, accessed March 17, 2019, http://solasbhride.ie/the-perpetual-flame/.

17. Philip A. Shaw, *Pagan Goddesses in the Early Germanic World* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 61.

in a pot and water them. Think about what's taking root in your life, hidden beneath the soil.

Beltane, Spring Cross-Quarter Day: May 1 (Traditional) or May 4–5 (Astrological)

Beltane celebrates life, fertility, and the height of springtime. It is the second fire festival of the year and is associated with maypole dances and the May Queen. The word *Beltane* likely comes from the Celtic word *bel*, meaning "bright" or "fortunate." The maypole is the most popular Beltane tradition, with a large wooden pole erected with ribbons hanging down. Even though Beltane is currently associated with courting and desire, there's nothing in Irish and English historical records that suggests that the weaving dance of the celebrants is anything but a fun time.

Flora, the Roman goddess of flowers, was honored with a festival every year at this time. Beltane marks the season of spring fruits such as strawberries, apricots, and winter cherries. To celebrate, enjoy good company, love your beloved, or perform a love spell to yourself or for your ideal partner. Use ribbons in your magic and plant seeds outside in the earth (check your local growing season).

Litha, Midsummer, Summer Solstice: June 20–21

This is the longest day of the year and the shortest night. It represents a time of celebration and joy. The fields are green and gold, the apple trees have formed fruit, and we're seeing the first rewards of our labor and all our dreams from Yule. *Litha* is a modern name for Midsummer and is thought to be the Old English word for the month of June, meaning "gentle" or "navigable," according to Bede.[18] The ancient pagan celebrations of feasting and having bonfires were adapted by the church into their version of it, which they called St. John's Day. It's associated with the fae thanks to the famous Shakespeare play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

To celebrate, make a bonfire, dance or trance, and stay up all night the day before to welcome the dawning sun or just step outside and feel its warmth on your face. You may even want to wed your beloved or make a vow to them.

18. Bede, *The Reckoning of Time*, trans. and ed. Faith Wallis (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 53–54.

Give gifts and offerings to nature spirits and the fae in the form of natural incense, food, juice, or alcohol.

Lammas or Lughnasadh, Summer Cross-Quarter Day: August 1 (Traditional) or August 6–7 (Astrological)

At this time of the year, the sun still warms the land, and the crops are bountiful, but the light has begun to fade. By this time, your spring-planted garden has likely yielded some fruit and vegetables, whether that's herbs, tomatoes, grain, or peppers.

Lughnasadh is an ancient Irish Celtic holiday associated with the first harvest of grain. It's named after Lugh, the Celtic god of light and crafts. It's another one of the Irish fire festivals. Lammas is another holiday from the Anglo-Saxons that is celebrated at the same time. Meaning "loaf mass," Lammas celebrates the first grain harvest.

To celebrate, harvest from your garden or field or purchase some in-season food from your local grocery and celebrate with a feast. Bake some bread or cookies. Light a candle to honor the third fire festival.

Autumn Equinox, Mabon. September 21–23 or the Nearest Full Moon

The autumn equinox is the day when light and darkness are equal. The days are still warm, and the crops either have been harvested or can be harvested.

The name of a Welsh god, *Mabon* means "son of the mother." It became associated with the autumn equinox in the 1970s when it was used on a witchcraft calendar. There's no record of a specific autumn equinox holiday in Europe, but it falls around the harvest time, so there were bound to be harvest festivals and celebrations, including harvest home festivals in Britain. This day is known as the second harvest, with many fruits, vegetables, and grains ripe for collecting and storing. On this day, consider what dualities you have in your life. What's coming to an end? Celebrate it with a feast.

Samhain, Autumn Cross-Quarter Day: October 31 (Traditional) or November 6–8 (Astrological)

Samhain is thought to mean "summer's end" in Irish and is celebrated with bonfires and a feast. It's thought of as the end of the old growing year and the beginning of the new year. By this time, the sun and warmth have begun to

fade even more. Samhain is the last harvest and marks the time of culling of everything from the garden or fields in order to prepare for the coming cold. As the land's green bounty turns brown and frost settles over it, it's a time to honor those who have passed away. It's considered the time of year when the veil between the worlds is the thinnest and we can communicate with those we've lost. Other cultures also believe this, as is seen in the Day of the Dead and the modern holiday Halloween, which was likely inspired by Samhain.

To honor your ancestors, set up an altar with their photos, keepsakes, or names, and give them some food. Light a candle for them. Meditate and listen to what they tell you. (More on working with the dead in chapter 7.)

The wheel turns back to Yule once again, marking our long cycle around the sun. When we honor these days, our connection with ourselves and the earth intensifies. Attuning with the earth can teach us so much about longer cycles. If you're interested in learning more about the sabbats, pick up a few good books and read some articles. You can also use your intuition and the general feel of each holiday to celebrate and flavor your work.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

Consult the Stars and Planets

Heather Renae Horton

Astrology is the study of the star language. It's important for an intuitive practitioner of witchcraft to have a basic understanding of astrology because the celestial seasons impart energetic pulses upon our psyches. We can use these energies and how we relate to them personally to infuse our practices with power.

The astrological calendar can be understood through seasonal quadrants (spring, summer, autumn, and winter), giving three zodiac signs for each season. The signs are broken down into elemental and modality categories. The four elements are fire, earth, air, and water: fire is the element of inspiration, earth is the element of the material plane, air is the element of intellect, and water the element of emotions. You are made of all four of these elements. The modalities are cardinal, fixed, and mutable: the cardinal modality initiates,

the fixed modality maintains, and the mutable modality changes and adjusts. Each season begins with a cardinal sign to initiate that season, followed by a fixed sign to hold or maintain the energy, followed by a mutable sign that adjusts the current season in preparation for the upcoming season.

The astrological calendar begins at the spring equinox with the sign of Aries, the cardinal fire sign of the zodiac, symbolized by the charging ram. This sign is the youngest and therefore is often perceived as rambunctious. This is the "I am" energy zone, the time of new inspirations and budding seedlings that charge like a ram out of the newly thawed ground.

Taurus is the fixed earth sign of the zodiac, symbolized by the steady bull. This sign is the stage of learning, similar to the preschool years of identification of the physical world. Often we'll hear the stubborn words "mine" or "I want it" from those in this energy zone. Taurus maintains the beauty and luxury of spring.

Gemini is the mutable air sign of the zodiac, symbolized by the twins, with two brains to gather all the information and spread it around. This is the curious child's "why?" energy zone. The twins teach us that spring can be a cool breeze on the one hand and a sweaty day in need of rain the next, in order to adjust us to prepare for summer.

We begin the season of summer with the cardinal water sign Cancer, symbolized by the crab. In this sign, we celebrate the summer solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, the longest day of the year. Cancer teaches us about the shifting of emotions similar to the puberty years, and just like the moving ocean tides, this is the sign that brings us crabby and moody emotions. Cancer is about security needs, especially around the home and family matters.

Leo is the fixed fire sign of the summer season, symbolized by the proud lion. This is the shining will of the young hero, determined to share the bright sunlight with all in the kingdom. The Leo lion maintains the beating sun and heart of summer.

Virgo is the mutable earth sign, symbolized by the virgin of the harvest. This sign is represented by early adult maturity, when we become aware of working together and caring for our daily lives in the details. Virgo adjusts summer in preparation for autumn.

Celebration of the autumn equinox brings us the cardinal air sign of Libra, symbolized by the scales of justice. The beauty of autumn is initiated with the

changing colors of the foliage. Libra is the life stage of marital partnership and teaches us to communicate. Balance and harmony are key.

Scorpio is the fixed water sign, symbolized by the shape-shifting scorpion that maintains the dying cycle of autumn. Scorpio brings us face-to-face with the intimate nature of life, death, and rebirth.

Sagittarius is the mutable fire sign that rounds out the autumn season with large feasts, celebrations, and colder weather in preparation for winter. Sagittarius is symbolized by the centaur, a creature often considered the drunkard of mythology. It is the energy stage of knowledge and jovial expressions.

We meet the winter solstice with Capricorn, the cardinal earth sign symbolized by the sea goat. This creature pulls from the creative ocean waters through its fish tail and transmutes this knowledge into the goat head for manifestation. Capricorn is the mature life force of climbing the mountain of success despite harsh conditions.

Aquarius is the fixed air sign that maintains the frigid air of winter and is symbolized by the water bearer, or the celestial being pouring the waters of knowledge onto the earthly plane. This is the life stage of aloofness, in knowing much and breaking free from limitations.

Pisces is the mutable water and final sign of the zodiac, symbolized by two fish bound together and swimming in opposing directions. It adjusts the winter season in preparation for spring by melting the snow and thawing the frozen ground. Pisces brings us collective wisdom through our emotional sensory experiences often bringing about confusion and feeling of spiritual escapism.

Bringing astrology into your intuitive witchcraft practice can help you gain insight about the external energies at play and how they affect you. Figure out which signs the sun, the moon, and the planets are in to ascertain what energies are prevailing at the time of your ritual or practice. Once you understand how you personally relate to the strengths and elements of each of the zodiac signs, you can align with those energies for manifestation and magic.

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Spontaneous Rituals

There may be times when your intuitive senses don't line up with the solar or lunar holidays. For example, you may not feel like having a feast to celebrate the Spring Equinox. That doesn't make you a bad witch. Being honest about what you feel and what you need is important. That's always the right place

for an intuitive witch to be. You never have to celebrate if you don't feel called to do so. If you don't resonate with the lunar phases or the solar Wheel of the Year, you can leave them behind entirely. It's more important to do whatever you feel is right, when you feel it, rather than celebrating an astrological event or a holiday on a specific day.

Following this line of thinking means you'll have more spiritual energy available for other celebrations that are more important to you. For example, perhaps you'll celebrate spring when you see your first spring flower instead of on the spring equinox. Maybe you prefer to have ritual every Sunday evening. Or perhaps you never want to have ritual and just want to have spiritual practices instead. These are all perfect options for an intuitive witch.

Spontaneous rituals are great options to celebrate when you feel called to do so. They can happen anywhere and anytime. Recently, I was walking in a forest with a friend when we came upon a place that felt magical. I felt a strong urge to make the most of the moment and have a ritual. We spun around and cast our intentions out to make a circle. We called upon a goddess close to our hearts and stated our deepest desires. We thanked her, opened the circle, and continued our walk with more inspiration and lighter spirits than we had before. It was short but so sweet. That spontaneous ritual was more magical than many of the rituals I've been in, and it was completely made up on the spot. Even though it occurred at a random time and place, it happened at precisely the right time and place for us.

Knowing that rituals can happen anywhere and anytime can be freeing. When we tap into what we feel and where we are, we're more in touch with our intuition. We're more present and in the moment, and more able to create what we need. The rituals we create at those times are often the perfect expressions of what we need. Whenever it feels right, feel free to partake in spontaneous rituals.

RITUAL

SPONTANEOUS RITUAL

The next time you feel a spiritual moment coming on, have a spontaneous intuitive ritual. Consider casting a circle, calling upon spirits or a deity, creating a magical item, meditating, or anything else that feels right for the moment. Use the information presented in this book to

make it your own and true to your heart. It can be silent or out loud. Afterward, evaluate if this experience was more meaningful than some of your other rituals in the past year. Do you need to reassess your rituals or practices?

The Heart of Practice and Ritual

Practice and ritual serve many purposes, all of them beneficial. I like to think of them as self-care because they replenish our energies. They're also like grooming, because they're energetic deep cleanses. They're sort of like seeing a therapist, because they heal and help us protect ourselves. They could be considered similar to working with a life coach, because we become more in touch with our true selves and our goals. Practices and rituals are all that and more. All these benefits help us see our paths better and get us more in touch with our intuition and energy.

With intuitive witchcraft, there's no requirement to have morning or nightly practices, to have intuitive rituals, or to observe any solar or lunar holidays, but I hope you give them a try. Think of these times as incentives to connect with yourself and your spirituality. Especially if it has been a long time since your last magical practice or ritual, these times can act like a gateway back into the wild woods of your intuition and spirituality, enabling you to step back onto the invisible path. Experiment with different practices and rituals to find ones that work for you. As always, keep doing whatever works.

Further Reading List

Campanelli, Pauline, and Dan Campanelli. *Wheel of the Year.* St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1989.

Hutton, Ronald. *Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999.

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PART II

Beyond the Veil

Night has fallen in the enchanted forest. By following your intuition about which way to go, you've found yourself in a dark clearing. In the starry sky above, a perfect full moon shines its silvery light down upon you. An owl calls out and a few bats swoop overhead. The trees in the grove beyond are older, their branches more gnarled and intricate than the younger forest in which you had been walking. You inhale their earthy, green aroma, and sense spirits in the ancient trees. The energy shifts slightly, and you realize they're sensing you back. The trees seem to be saying something to you.

So far on your intuitive journey, you heard the call of the wild soul and walked into the enchanted forest of your own intuitive spirituality. You've experienced the spark of intuition from within and reevaluated what energy feels like in your body. You've created magic and followed your "path without a path," having adventures and experiences along the way. You've honored yourself in accordance with the sun, the moon, or your own special moments.

You may feel tired at this point. You may want to rest here, in this peaceful glen. In fact, many witches' journeys stop here, before they reach the ink-dark

pool of the void, before they reach Baba Yaga's hut, and before they ever encounter a god or a spirit. If your practice stops here, you'll be more informed and better practiced than many others, but you could be missing out on one of the greatest adventures of your life—experiencing the mysteries.

As always with intuitive witchcraft, the choice is yours. Rest as long as you need. You don't have to be proficient in all areas of witchcraft, and you certainly don't have to study the mysteries. It's fine to focus on herbs, manifestation, and simple intuitive magics. Keep doing your practice and rituals, and you'll be just fine.

But if you ever feel stagnant, or a yearning for something more, search your soul. Do you crave depth, mysterious experiences, the profound, and more wilderness? Do you want to feel the wind in your hair after you've climbed the tallest peak and come close enough to touch the stars? If so, get back on the intuitive path. Walk deeper into the ancient part of the wild woods. Yes, there are shadows, but there are also points of light that dance in the distance.

A veil separates the mundane world from the mystical, holding everyday existence apart from the sublime. Beyond the veil is a realm of pure energy. It's where faeries play, ghosts wander, and the gods reside. This world speaks a language of divination, symbols, visions, and omens. It's a land where a deeper path unfolds before you, one that makes you read your intuition on multiple levels. We catch glimpses of it from time to time. Through more advanced intuitive witchcraft, you can pass through the veil and travel beyond, gleaning insights and wisdom from the ages.

Part 1 of this book could be likened to learning how to play an instrument by reading sheet music. After practicing and refining your techniques, you'd be proficient in playing many songs, some with your own bent to them. However, there's a level beyond merely being proficient at playing. True artistry requires you to play music from your soul, to write your own songs, and to put so much energy into your performances that you have the ability to move people. Just like the ability to improvise with music, the majority of advanced magics are not found in books. That's because it's experiential and unique to every person.

Part 2 of this book contains a multitude of information about esoteric practices. Let your intuition guide you through them. Evaluate what works for you. Try out the practices and see where you shine. If you're passionate about any of them, stick with them. Learning these mysteries takes time, and patience is

important. If you keep going, your practice will evolve over the years and become more fulfilling and magical than you ever thought possible.

There's joy in learning more, in practicing until you're adept, raising massive amounts of power, getting better at your art, and becoming closer to your ideal self. I challenge you to step up and unleash your possibilities. Take your magical energy a step further. Then two steps further. Then ten. Then a thousand. Own your power. It is yours for the claiming.

Chapter 6

Working with the Gods

Some intuitive witches are drawn to the gods, and I'm one of those people. I've known from a very young age that my heart belonged to a couple of wonderful goddesses. My deepest spiritual experiences have come from working with them, and they've been sources of support, positive changes, and growth in my life. To me, the gods are real, without a doubt. I can feel them, see them in my mind's eye, and hear them speak. They're responsive to my requests and usually very kind.

However, some intuitive witches don't want to work with any deities, and that's fine. There's no rule requiring you to believe in or work with the gods. It's your choice. Working with them isn't for everyone. It can be demanding, especially if they want you to carry out their will. Until you receive a sign from them, blind faith may be necessary, and not everyone is comfortable with that. If you were raised with a strict religious household, you may wish to take a break from all of the gods, and that's understandable too.

This chapter is about how to work with the gods intuitively and energetically and the rewards that come from those interactions. In this book, *the gods* is a loosely defined term meaning gods, goddesses, and nongendered deities from various pantheons and cultures all over the world. If you choose to work with them, intuitive witchcraft is a great way to get to know them and strengthen your bonds.

What Are the Gods?

People have theorized about what the gods are for a long time, but no one knows for sure. It's possible they're energetic archetypes that hold iconic power. They could be beings of infinite power who created the earth and humanity. Maybe they arrived later, when humans became conscious. It's possible that they're a collective of all the souls of the dead who are attracted to those gods. Maybe they're higher-dimensional beings. Or perhaps they're spirits born of angels and humans. It's even possible that they're our spirit guides, taking on different forms.

Everyone has different experiences with the gods, so it's hard to say exactly what they are. One thing is certain—they've made themselves known. Because of that, they've been worshipped since the dawn of humanity, for countless millennia. Some of the oldest human artifacts are items associated with pagan worship. Their influence built communities and empires.

Not everything you read about the gods is the truth, though. In ancient times, myths about the gods were used as metaphors, morals, and entertainment for the cultures who created them. On top of that, many of the myths have been misinterpreted and mistranslated several times over through the ages. They may only provide a sliver of insight on who the gods really are. They certainly don't do justice to a real encounter with one. To discover the truth about who a deity really is, speak with someone who works with them or interact with them on your own.

What Do the Gods Want?

Why would all-powerful beings want to work with us humans, with our limited abilities and comparatively short lives? The best answer I've heard is that the gods love us deeply. This theory posits that everything they do is an attempt to help us. They want individuals to succeed in their endeavors, and they also want humanity to improve. They want to give us tools to help make that possible.

Not everyone agrees with this sentiment, though. Some people believe the gods have their own agendas, and they only help us with our goals if they match their own, selfish reasons. In other words, they reward us with gifts and opportunities in the hopes of making their own voices heard, so to speak.

Other people have theorized that our love and appreciation of the gods keeps them alive, possibly because they consume the energy we give them. It has also been theorized that our feelings about the gods mirrors their feelings about us. If we love a goddess, she loves us back just as much. If we hate a god or are ambivalent, they feel the same way about us. Yet other people believe that the gods just enjoy being worshipped, and they reward people in order to help them worship them even more. Whatever the reason or agenda is, it's clear that they want to work with us, if we'll have them.

Researching and Choosing Deities to Work With

There are so many gods and goddesses in the world. If you've never worked with any before, it can be hard to narrow down which ones to approach first. There are a few ways to ascertain which ones might be best for you. Think back to your childhood and whether you experienced anything relating to the gods there. It's possible you've forgotten or normalized some divine interaction because your young mind didn't understand it.

Do research. Read books about the gods and their ancient worship, including their poetry, invocations, appeals, and hymns. For example, if you want to look up information about Diana, look into Roman sources. Learn the gods' historical offerings. Research their holy days and throw them a party on that day. Talk with people who work with them and read articles from modern pagan writers. Figure out which of the gods stir something within you. If you don't feel anything, look for similarities between you. Maybe you both work with fire or the moon.

Research the deities who may have been worshipped by people in your ancestral line. If those ancestor spirits are still around, they might be able to give you an inside line to that deity. Getting your DNA tested can reveal a lot about your ancestors that you may not have known. For example, I've always been told I'm English, Dutch, and German, but after genetic testing, I discovered I also have Italian, Spanish, French, Irish, Middle Eastern, and Norse roots.

The best advice for choosing a deity is to follow your heart and your intuition. If you feel pleasant sensations when you read about them, it's a good sign. Start there.

Respecting Other Cultures

It's important to be sensitive to the original cultures where the gods came from and to tread carefully to attempt to not offend anyone in the living cultures. Although it's impossible to never offend anyone, there are a few things to consider when stepping into other cultures' spiritual realms.

With ancient deities, there's usually no living culture, and as such, little is known about the deities. For example, the Babylonian culture that worshipped the goddess Astarte is long gone and has been replaced several times over. Most of what is known about Astarte has been lost to time. Working with her would be limited to what little is known and what can be learned through personal gnosis or direct experience with her. In this instance, there's little chance of offending someone.

Other ancient deities have migrated all over the world and are alive and well in modern society. They've evolved alongside humanity and have insinuated themselves into several current aspects of our societies. For example, the ancient Greek gods leapt from Greece to Rome, to Europe, to Africa, to the Middle East, to North America, and even farther. Their insinuation into modern culture is evident in the giant Statue of Liberty (Libertas) in the United States, statue replications of those gods all over the world, in ubiquitous symbols such as Asclepius's rod (a symbol of a snake entwined on a staff representing health care), in worldwide companies such as Nike (a goddess of victory often associated with Athena) or FTD (which uses Hermes as their logo), in the astronomical nomenclature (such as the Apollo moon module), on our currency, and in their immersion in popular culture in the form of movies, television shows, and books. Many people in modern society grew up with the Greek gods in one form or another.

When the gods insinuate themselves into cultures all over the world and over several millennia, interpretations of them are bound to vary. I believe the gods can change over the millennia, and in different regions, to fit the changing needs of humanity. Proof of this is the fact that scholars believe that Artemis, Hekate, and several other Greek deities came from other, even more ancient origins. Sometimes, humanity and the gods evolve together.

Worship of the Greek gods is considered an open religion, meaning that there are no strict rules about how to do it the right way. The different city-states of Greece often had different methods of worship, so any kind of wor-

ship could be considered a modern reflection of historic times. However, there is a Greek revival movement known as *Hellenismos*. The practitioners reenact practices and rituals from the Hellenic era. They prize Hellenic historical accuracy above all else, and they don't accept any interpretation of the Greek gods other than what's in ancient texts. If you work with the Greek gods, you may need to acknowledge the modernity of your relationship with them in certain circles, and be aware that someone else might worship those gods in a historical timeframe. To work around this, it's helpful to say something like, "I work with certain deities in the Greek pantheon using modern methods." This clarification makes it clear that you're not practicing Hellenismos, and you don't worship them exactly the way the ancient Greeks did.

The last example of working with deities of a living culture that isn't your own is the most important. There are some religions and spiritualities that are considered "closed," in that they do not wish to teach others, and they do not want others to try to learn their religion, unless they were born into the culture or were adopted into it. Examples of closed religions include many Native American religions, Santería, the Mayan and Aztec religions, the Romani religion, and various Pacific Island religions, among others. It's highly recommended that these religions be left alone, as the possibility of misunderstanding and offense is the greatest.

Some religions are semiclosed, in that specific initiatory rites are needed before someone can be recognized as a practitioner, priest, or priestess. A few examples of these include Vodou, traditional Wicca, other religions with a tradition, and some mainstream religions, such as Judaism and Catholicism. Initiatory rites in these traditional religions keep the integrity of the religion intact. They prevent people from claiming to be a part of them if they haven't been taught the right materials by the right people.

To clarify how much we could possibly get wrong about a traditional religion if we try to adapt some tools but don't have the proper knowledge, let's use a metaphor. Say you heard about this game called baseball, but you don't know how to play it, and you've never been to a game before. However, you have heard about the tools they use, the general setup, and some of the things the players do. Unfortunately, you don't know anyone who plays baseball, and you don't even know how to research whether there are any teams accepting new members. You're really into the idea of baseball, though, so you buy a

baseball, get a bat, wear a jersey, draw bases in your backyard, and start playing. Unbeknownst to you, however, you accidentally bought a tennis ball instead of a real baseball, and you're wearing tennis shoes instead of baseball cleats. Your bat was made for a child, and you can't figure out what to do with the soccer goal you also bought, but you're pretty sure they all go together. But you still have fun by throwing the ball in the air, hitting it, and dashing to third base. Your "baseball," with all these mismatched items, doesn't really look like a real baseball game, does it? This is how some people in closed or semiclosed religions feel about someone trying to practice their religion without being initiated. If you want to learn real baseball, you sign up for instruction, buy your gear from a reputable source, and eventually, play in a real game with other people.

To put this metaphor back into a religious context, there are several appropriate steps that could be taken with a semiclosed religion to honor the spiritual traditions and become worthy of their secrets. This is through source knowledge (reading books from primary sources and/or direct teaching or training from a primary source); great reverence to the gods, their images, and attributes; acknowledgment of how your practice differs from the traditional cultures; treating the living cultures and origins with appropriate respect; and by receiving confirmation from the gods that they want to work with you.

I'll share an example of how to be respectful in a semiclosed religion. In my twenties, I lived in a Vodou temple. Vodou is a semiclosed religion. It originated in Haiti as a variation of West African religions, which were brought to the Americas by people who were seized from their homelands to work as slaves. Due to the cruel and violent history of slavery in the colonial era and its enduring legacy of racism, the possibility of offending someone in a culture such as this could be very great, especially as a white American.

In my early days at the Vodou temple, I was not invited to the rituals, and I was okay with that. I knew I hadn't earned any right to go. And so, I cared for the numerous cats, washed dishes, swept the floor, cooked food, and performed other chores in exchange for free rent. The gods were everywhere in the temple—every room contained altars, paintings of the gods, and veves on the walls. After several weeks of living there, the priest and priestess invited me to take part in some of the rituals. I was also permitted to assist in the offerings

of cornmeal and apples at the nearby lake. They gave me full access to their library too, and I read many of their books.

The more I read about the god Papa Legba, the more he fascinated me. His main role is the gatekeeper of the spiritual realm. As such, he's often one of the first gods people work with. There was something about him—I was so drawn to his energy. However, I didn't want to assume he wanted to work with me too, because there was such a stretch between our cultures. I didn't want to call upon him randomly in one of my pagan rituals because I respected his power and the culture he came from so much.

Day after day, I read stories about him and learned more about Haitian culture. In rituals that I was invited to, the temple priest and I chanted his invocation. I approached him respectfully and gave him offerings, expecting nothing in return. I had no expectations for Papa Legba, and I asked for no favors from him. My affection for him grew, and after several offerings, I asked for a sign, for him to tell me if he wanted to work with me or not.

For weeks, I received no confirmation. I felt as if it were a test of patience, so I kept up my humble supplication. It was enough for me to give him offerings and energy from time to time. That alone satisfied me.

A couple of weeks later, the priest, the priestess, and I were getting ready for a party. I was writing something in my book of shadows when my pen stopped working. I touched the pen to my tongue to get the ink flowing, as I always did when that happened. Only that time, the tip of my pen broke, and a gush of liquid poured into my mouth. I spit out a pool of black ink onto my open book of shadows. One glance into a nearby mirror showed me that my teeth and tongue were completely black. The priest and priestess burst into laughter.

"Papa Legba likes you," the priest said.

He went on to tell me he only pranks those he likes, so in his way, it was a compliment. After the shock wore off, I laughed with them. I'd known Papa Legba was a trickster, but I hadn't thought I'd be the victim of one of his pranks, especially as a sign that he was okay with me. After that night, I went on to work with him, even after I left the temple.

I believe this is an example of how to respectfully approach a deity from a different culture. Other people may disagree based on the premise that I was

not raised with Vodou, and it's not within my heritage. In the end, you must decide where your comfort level is. I believe that any person has the ability to work with a nonclosed-religion deity if they seek source information, are respectful enough, and acknowledge their limitations.

If you wish to work with deities of nonclosed religions from other cultures, tread carefully to be culturally *appreciative* and not culturally appropriative. Decolonializing our practices is an important concept when thinking about religions. If you're not of the culture where the deity originated or were not raised within a culture where the deity was found, allow yourself the humility to not be an expert about all aspects about them, especially the cultural parts. Leave that role to someone closer to the source. Allow your work with these gods to be something that's a respectful alliance, as opposed to thinking it's something to which you're entitled. Talk with someone who knows more about the gods and ask how they practice. Listen to what they have to say. If you can study with a tradition that teaches about them, do so.

The gods will let us know if they don't want to work with us. If you don't receive a sign, accept it and move on. Consider whether there's another deity you'd like to work with instead. However, if you do receive confirmation from them, especially if it was interpreted as a beneficial sign from someone who knows them well, move past the preliminary gestures and into a deeper relationship.

Perhaps the most important piece of advice when working with a new deity is to be patient, respectful, and gracious. Give them your energy and love, and don't ask for anything until you feel a connection with them. In the end, it all comes down to having and showing an abundance of respect. We can learn a lot from other cultures and their deities.

Connecting with the Gods

History books about ancient cultures often refer to the gods and the rituals that took place for them, but often, the descriptions are too vague for us to know what actually happened. There's little to no information about what kind of offering to make, what words to say, how to prepare for a ritual, and which days the rituals were celebrated. Some of this missing information is due to a verbal tradition. Things simply weren't written down, so we have no way of knowing what happened. Other times, a historian may have omitted details due to their

own disinterest or distaste. Similarly, some rituals were never recorded because they were enacted by people who weren't powerful within their culture and didn't have the ability to write or access to writing tools. A lot of wisdom has been lost over the ages, much of it irretrievable.

Fortunately, these old, traditional methods of rituals and communications with the gods are not the only ways we can interact with them. We don't have to perform the same exact ritual as the historic cultures did. Indeed, oftentimes, it's absolutely impossible. Our modern pagan methods of practices and rituals will work most of the time. And as intuitive witches, we do what works.

Get to know your chosen deity and their energy. Visit with them and share gifts. Speak with them as if you were getting to know a new friend. If the two of you are compatible, you'll likely receive a sign or some other form of interaction. Read on for some of the best ways to connect with the gods.

Call Upon Them in Rituals

Call upon your favorite gods to assist you in your spiritual work. Do whatever you feel is appropriate for them, whether it's an offering, connecting with them and listening to them, or an elaborate intuitive ritual. If it feels appropriate, use modern pagan methods of calling upon the gods after casting a circle. This can bring their presences into the circle and lets you communicate with them. A variation of this is to call upon them as you're casting the circle, letting the gods be energetic representations of each element and direction: for example, "To the east, I call upon Pallas Athena, bright-eyed goddess of wisdom, courage, and insight. Be with me in my new moon ritual." Four different deities can be called, or different aspects of the same deity can be called upon. Do what feels right.

Call Upon Them in Practice

A formal ritual with a circle isn't necessary to call upon the gods. You can call upon them whenever you need them. You can ask Freya for love while stirring honey into your morning tea, meditate while thinking of Shiva and Shakti, or speak to Baron Samedi in front of a graveyard. The gods can hear our pleas and can help with our small magics and practices.

Make Altars

One of the best ways to start working with a deity is to make an altar devoted to them. Altars are powerful ways to connect with the gods and can bring about a much deeper relationship with them than almost anything else. The power of altars and statues has been known for several millennia. The Old Testament of the Bible even instructed Hebrews to "break down [pagan] altars, and chop down their Asherim [images related to the goddess Asherah] and burn their carved images."[19] The immense power of pagan altars and images is made very clear in these passages!

To create an altar, pick a place that's suitable. Use an altar cloth, if it's appropriate for the location, in a color that feels like their energy. Set the altar with items that you associate with that deity. For example, an altar to Bast, the Egyptian goddess of fertility, protection, and cats, could have a black altar cloth that represents protection, some cat and lion figurines, and a statue to her. You could also add items that are historically associated with her, such as a sistrum (an Egyptian rattle), a necklace or collar, an ankh, or a shield.

Use the gods' imagery, their earthly representations, and symbolism. Most of the gods like physical statues and images of themselves because symbolism is a language they understand. Ask them what they would like to see on their altar. If they answer, do your best to make it so. Consider having a dedication ceremony in which you dedicate the altar to your chosen deity with a ritual and many offerings.

Make Offerings

It has been said that a ritual without an offering is spiritless. Whether this is true or not, I've found that the gods I work with are more willing to interact with me when I give them what they like. Offerings can take the form of several different things, and different deities will like different offerings. Here are some of the most common offerings and methods of presentation.

Several deities like alcohol. This can be poured into a chalice, a fancy glass, or a shot glass, or it can be poured as a libation onto the ground. Give offerings in rituals or practice, speak their name, and thank them in the manner they like. For example, Odin seems to like mead or beer and to be toasted in

19. Deuteronomy 7:5 (English Standard Version).

the traditional Nordic cheer *"Skol!"* This was something that came to me intuitively, but upon researching it, I found a historical reference from the seventh century about Germanic pagans making an offering of beer to him.[20] On the dark moon, I pour a little red wine for Hekate in the liminal place where my back porch meets my yard. While I pour it, I thank her for her assistance, using some of the epithets associated with her. Other gods prefer other methods that are more specific to who they are. Cater to their whims, and they'll cater to yours. Tea and coffee are other good beverage offerings.

The gods love food offerings too. If you're celebrating a victory that they assisted with, purchase something special and give it to them or split it with them. Try to give them the food they like. Look into the regional food where the deity came from and offer that.

The gods also like to receive burned offerings. There's something about the transformation of physical matter into smoke and ash that they like. Incense sticks are probably the easiest way to burn offerings, but it's not necessarily the best, especially since some of them are made with subpar ingredients, such as fragrances that contain toxins. Experiment with tossing herbs onto a bonfire, or burn resins in a cauldron with an incense charcoal disk. Light aflame an offering such as dried herbs, and set it down inside a metal or a ceramic bowl or, my personal favorite, on a sheet of volcanic rock. Burning bay laurel leaves has a dazzling effect and is the preference of many of the Greek gods. Woods such as palo santo, sandalwood, pine, and cedar all have unique aromas and correspondences, and some may even be local to your area. Resins, including frankincense, myrrh, copal, and others, are a little more expensive, but they can be worth it if your deity especially likes them. Burned offerings don't have to be exotic or expensive. Some of the best burned offerings may be growing just outside your back door. I've burned homegrown peppermint, lavender, sage, rosemary, and catnip—all to great effect. You can offer just about anything to the gods, including flowers and candles as well. Experiment with what works and make notes in your book of shadows.

A passage about offerings to pagan gods isn't complete without touching upon animal sacrifice. Historically, it was once an accepted part of pagan

20. Jonas, *Life of Saint Columban*, rev. ed., ed. Dana Carleton Munro (Philadelphia: Department of History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1895), 31–32, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044009636812.

religious practice in many cultures. In modern times, however, it has mostly fallen out of favor. There are few pagan religions and spiritualities that use animals as offerings, including Santería, Vodou, Heathenry, and some kitchen and farm witchcrafts, among others. It's my opinion that animals and other living creatures should never be sacrificed unless done so lawfully, respectfully, and with the animal's flesh served as part of a meal. A more pleasant way to work around a god known for animal sacrifice would be to make cookies in the shape of the animals and offer them or offer a portion of meat to them.

Consider using beautiful, dedicated vessels for your offerings. An offering poured into an elegant chalice that has the energy associated with that deity would be very attractive to them. They may be more open to working with you if they see you're making an effort. Once an offering touches an altar, it should not be consumed. Leave offerings on your altar for a day, or longer if it won't rot or spoil, unless your deity likes that. Hel, one of the primary goddesses I work with, likes to be offered fruit and flowers and prefers to have them remain on the altar as they dry and rot. To appease her and keep my household safe, I use a dish beneath the offering, cut them up into small pieces, and remove them before they grow mold.

Dispose of consumed offerings into a compost pile, garden, a liminal place, a special natural place, or merely leave the remains outside if it's natural. Energetically, this is often considered better than pouring offerings down the drain or throwing them away because it recycles the energy back to the earth.

Give the Gods Energy and Gratitude

The ancient Greeks felt that "without *aerohs* [devotional affection for the gods], our offerings are meaningless."[21] In other words, offerings shouldn't be made out of mere obligation: whatever we give them should contain our love for them. It implies that the real treat for the gods is not the offering but the energy behind it.

Part of my regular practice is to give energetic offerings to my favorite deities. I've received immense rewards from this type of offering in both practices and rituals. Best of all, it's completely free and very easy. To give a deity energy, enter a meditative state. Think of them and open your heart. Feel love, admira-

21. "Offerings to Gods in Hellenismos," HellenicGods.org, accessed January 17, 2019, http://www.hellenicgods.org/offerings-to-gods-in-hellenismos.

tion, and devotion to them. Align your energy with their energy. Thank them and tell them why you appreciate them. Gratitude is one of the sincerest emotions. It's also a high compliment—not only are you acknowledging their assistance and powers, you're also sticking around after they gave you your success with your goals. In other words, you came back to them when you don't need anything at all, simply to check in and tell them that you appreciate them. You might feel energy returned to you from the gods, and then some. This is a truly magical act, and one that can prove your connection with them.

Use Symbology

Symbology is the practice of using objects to represent an abstract idea. Think of Pan's horns and goat legs, which represent his animalistic, unbridled sexuality. Consider Hekate's torches, which represent her power as the bringer of light and her role as the guide through the Eleusinian mysteries. Symbolism has always held a raw, primitive power over the human subconscious because the nonverbal right hemisphere of the brain is rich with personal and universal symbolic imagery. When we attribute symbolism to the gods, things take a more meaningful turn. When used in magical acts, symbolism can evoke deeper meanings within us. This can strengthen our rituals and our connections with the gods.

Some people have theorized that the gods and spirits are higher-dimensional beings and, as such, have limited capabilities of interacting with us three-dimensional beings. If this is true, it means that they might be able to communicate in the form of energy and, by extension, thought. We can bridge the gap between us and them by using symbology. This can include the places, items, names, titles, and other things associated with the gods. Here are a few ways to incorporate symbolism into your pagan practice:

- When you invoke or commune with the gods, you can envision them, their symbolisms, and their aspects. Bring the symbolism to life in your mind to connect with them. An example of thinking in symbolism for Aphrodite would be imagining that you're walking on a lovely beach, feeling the warm sun on your shoulders, hearing the gentle crash and retreat of the waves, and seeing the beauty of seashells and the white crests of the waves. Maybe you even smell the salty aroma of the ocean.

If you can create this energetic atmosphere in your mind, you're creating a more sympathetic mindset for her to visit you.

- ★ When invoking or addressing the gods, speak in the language of symbolism. The ancient Greeks had epithets, or addresses, for the gods, which included their personal symbolism. It's easy to envision "cow-faced Hera" or "bright-eyed Athena." Writing and reciting poetry is another way to use the language of symbolism. It's especially useful because it expands our minds to encompass the divine realms.
- ★ Dress and move in symbolism. Wear what your favorite deities wore, according to historical art. Put something together that they might wear in this modern age. Wear historical replications of their jewelry. If your favorite goddess is associated with rubies, wear a ruby bracelet or a ruby necklace. If you worship Cernunnos, wear a torc. Many pagan deities have folkloric dances or gestures associated with them. Look up videos online to see if there are any. If so, perform them to the best of your ability with the traditional music, if it's available.
- ★ Anything you do that makes the gods feel more at home and familiar with you can be used to evoke a deeper connection. Experiment with this concept and use whatever seems to work.

RITUAL

OFFERING TO A DEITY

Choose a deity and go to a place where they are renowned. For example, you might go to the woods for Artemis or to a river for Oshun. Center yourself and call their energy to you. Be with them. Imagine their symbolism and give them your loving energy. Make an offering and close your eyes. Listen for their quiet voice.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

Writing Invocations and Devotional Speech

Hannah Savage

It can be hard to connect with invocations or ritual speech written by someone who might have a different relationship with the entity involved. I've found that writing my own personalized invocations has more power.

One of the best ways of doing this is to collect any research materials that might help you connect with the entity—titles, favored myths, epithets … whatever you may want to include when speaking to them. With your collection, enter a meditative state. Focus on the entity; if you have an altar for them, face it, light their candle, and set out offerings.

Begin to write without judgment—whatever comes to mind. What do you think they would like to be called? Which aspects of them do you work closely with? What myth has stuck out as particularly representative to you?

When you feel finished, take a break. Stand up, drink some water, and take a deep breath. Then look it over. Are there any clunky phrases you can reword? Combine? Divide? Eliminate completely? Play around with it. Test it out. Use it in ritual, and critique it for next time. Tweak. You and your relationships with your entities are constantly evolving. Part of the beauty of writing your own ritual speech is that it can evolve with you.

Be sure to state any terms or specific intentions clearly. If you're having trouble, start with one of these formulas:

Hail, (deity name), (epithet or title), (epithet or description),
(accomplishment or mythological reference),
(epithet), I honor you. Hail, (deity name).

Hail, (epithet or description), (request), (flattering epithet or title),
I ask or implore (request).

Does rhyming your lines feel forced and restrictive, or does it help you focus your intention? Whether you write in your first language or one associated with the entity in question, they will hear you. You don't have to speak a language with which you're not comfortable, but some people (like me) find it easier to enter trance and meditative states when speaking unfamiliar words.

Give yourself permission to try new methods. There's no wrong way to write an invocation. As long as it's working for you, you're doing it right.

• • •

How the Gods Communicate

When I was a young witchling, I had no idea what people meant when they said the gods or spirits spoke to them. I had never heard voices, either out loud or in my head. I didn't understand why I never heard the gods speak until I experienced

it myself. It's a complicated, interesting experience. Higher-dimensional entities have unique problems connecting to the third dimension, much in the same way that we would encounter problems when trying to interact with a two-dimensional entity. Due to these naturally inherent limitations, it's nearly inconceivable to know exactly what the gods are, who they are, and why they exist, among other things. But if you put all that aside, there are ways that they can communicate, mostly through energy. Read on for a list of the ways in which the gods can communicate with us.

Presence

Sometimes, when I call upon a deity, they show up. I sense an energetic shift in the room. A powerful presence makes things feel different somehow. Chills, shivers, or goosebumps may race over my skin, my scalp might become electrified, or a cool, otherworldly wind could blow across my body. Sometimes, I even catch a whiff of a strange aroma. (I'm looking at you, Pan!) Once, after giving a goddess energy and gratitude, I felt waves of love pour into my heart from the direction of her altar. It was a sensation that rejuvenated me entirely. Being in the presence of some gods can feel marvelous, as if we're in a slightly different, more spiritual reality.

But not all of the gods feel serene. I've also felt fear in the presence of a powerful and wild goddess. Once I accepted her mysteries—that I didn't understand what was happening or how she existed—my fear left. I was filled with love, respect, and awe, even if I was slightly afraid.

Moments like these, when you feel the presence of the gods, are special. When you experience them, cherish them. They may not happen every day, so it makes them all the more special.

A Soft Voice

The gods can most often be experienced as a soft, internal voice within one's own head. It's similar to the way you'd experience thoughts, but the voice of the gods is usually vastly different. It comes unbidden, with its own unique cadence. You might even hear an accent or a tone of voice. The gods will usually tell you things that you had no other way of knowing about.

Before you dismiss this as not for you or something you'll never be able to do, think about whether you've ever talked with your pets or any other ani-

mals. Speaking with the gods is not unlike asking your cat or dog a question and knowing their answer or hearing their response in your head. If you've ever had an intelligent conversation with your animal companion, you're probably proficient in communicating with the gods as well.

A Nudge

The gods sometimes speak in nonverbal communication. There are times when they give me an intuitive nudge. *Don't go there*, they say, or, *Talk with that person.* They can highlight different people to make them more attractive to us or make objects seem as if they're glowing. Pay attention to these nudges. Oftentimes, the gods are trying to connect likeminded people or reveal something to us.

With Signs

There are times when a butterfly is just a butterfly, but sometimes, it's more. The gods can connect with the natural world more easily than we can, and they can use it to communicate with us. Signs are reminders that something deeper is at play. For more information about signs, read the section about omens in chapter 12.

Out Loud

The most amazing form of communication with the gods is when someone hears a voice. This is different from the soft internal voice because it's out loud. The people who have experienced this say it was as if someone were in the same room, talking to them. Genuine experiences of this seem to be rare, but one thing is certain: when they speak that loudly, you should definitely listen.

A Noise

There may be times when you mention a deity and a strange noise will sound out. It could be a dog's bark, a crow caw, and even a squeaky oven door that never squeaked before. Pay attention to mysterious noises, especially if they're well-timed to what you were saying or thinking.

A Vision

Visions of the gods with the naked eye may be among the rarest of communications, but they do happen. More common is seeing them or an energetic entity with second sight, through the third eye. Because a direct vision is so rare, take heed when this happens.

Personal Gnosis

Personal gnosis could be defined as receiving direct knowledge and wisdom from the gods through interactions with them. It's the basis for all religions and spiritualities. At some point, someone had a personal gnosis and wrote down their experiences. The people in power at the time deemed their interpretation to be true. In many instances, it became the only official version. Anyone who had a personal gnosis that agreed with the official version was deemed to have "verified personal gnosis." Anyone who had a different personal experience with the gods was said to have "unverified personal gnosis."

There's an ongoing debate in the pagan and witch communities about personal gnosis. Some people prefer a very traditional interpretation of the gods and only accept what was written about the gods thousands of years ago. Other people are open to modern interpretations. Here's why I think unverified personal gnosis experiences can be closer to reality than verified person gnosis accounts.

- ★ Many stories of the ancient gods were written a millennium ago if not more, during a much different time. These eras may not have been as equality-minded about topics such as racism, women's rights, gay rights, slavery, transgender people, and so on. Some of the old stories about the gods may be more indicative of the human social norms at that time than a true representation of the gods.
- ★ Myths about the gods might not be completely correct due to the biases of those who translated and interpreted history. For example, it was thought by the majority of historians of the 1800s that all Vikings who were buried with weapons were male. However, recent DNA testing proved that one of the most decorated and weapon-laden graves in Scan-

dinavia was the grave of a female.[22] If the historians got that wrong due to their biases about women, what else could they have gotten wrong?

- ★ It's possible that the gods could show themselves in unique ways to different people. A friend of mine sees Aphrodite as a plus-size goddess and is empowered by that image. Traditional Hellenists see Aphrodite differently, as slender. However, deities don't have to be the same exact being for everyone. I'm not the same person at work, the hardware store, at home, with my beloved, or with my friends—not by a long shot. We could extend a little flexibility to the gods to make their own choices about how they present themselves, what they desire for different people, and how they want to interact with them. It's okay for them to want different things for different people.
- ★ It's possible the gods can change. We live in modern times, where the gods are still alive and active. Who's to say they haven't changed like we do, year after year, evolving alongside humanity? Maybe they're more fluid than we think, and they are able to shift to reflect what humankind needs from them.

If your unverified personal gnosis empowers you, stand by your belief and don't let someone tell you you're wrong. Some of my most profound moments with the gods are considered unverified personal gnosis, and I'm okay with that. If it doesn't hurt anyone, and you're not trying to force others to join in your vision, don't worry about it. Many of the best pagan minds of our times support unverified personal gnosis.

That being said, always tell people how you received your personal gnosis: for example, "I've always felt that Aphrodite was more of a plus-size goddess," "I had a dream that Aphrodite was well-rounded," or "I had a vision of Aphrodite, and let me tell you—she was not shaped like Barbie." This acknowledgment is more accurate and honest than arguing with someone over a traditional text.

It's so inspiring and amazing that the gods are alive and make themselves known to us. I hope your personal gnosis is rich and helpful, and that, verified

22. Thad Morgan, "DNA Proves Viking Women Were Powerful Warriors," History.com, last modified March 5, 2019, https://www.history.com/news/dna-proves-viking-women-were-powerful-warriors.

or not, you share your experiences. I get chills whenever I hear or read about personal gnosis. It's as if the deity is right there with me.

Attracting the Gods with Virtue

The ancient Greeks thought we could attract the grace of the gods through being virtuous. They believed that by being pure of mind, performing cleansings, having rituals, and doing good deeds in the world, the gods would want to give us gifts and grant our wishes.[23] If that's the case, being virtuous is a gateway to spiritual growth and a better life.

When I do something unvirtuous, such as gossip about other people, lie, or take something that doesn't belong to me (even for a little bit), it doesn't feel good. I get bogged down with emotional energy for several hours afterward and feel a bit hung over, for lack of a better word. When we experience lower emotional energy, it can be a lot harder to get in touch with the gods. Conversely, when I do something virtuous, like stand up against injustice, let someone with kids go in line ahead of me, help a lost blind person find their way, pick up trash, or donate to a worthy charity, life feels kinder and more meaningful. I feel more open and aligned with positive energy sources.

When we open up to becoming virtuous, it makes us truer to our higher selves, to humanity's greater good, and perhaps even to the missions of the gods. If you're looking for a reason to make positive changes in your life, try being virtuous. Other things you can do to increase your virtue include helping people, being fair and kind even when people are not in the room, being patient, being truthful, and keeping your word. Whether these practices gain the gods' attention and rewards or not, they certainly can't hurt.

Common Problems When Working with the Gods

There are a few potential problems you could encounter while working with the gods, especially as a beginner. Don't let these stories discourage you. I've dealt with all these problems. Eventually, I found a way to work with gods who are in alignment with me.

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23. "Virtue in Hellenismos," HellenicGods.org, accessed January 17, 2019, http://www.hellenicgods.org/virtue-in-hellenismos.

No Response

You made an altar for him, you bought his favorite flowers, you lit a candle for him on his feast day, and you even served him beer, but the god never came. Worse still, he's dodging your calls, month after month. Try as you might, some gods may never attend your rituals. If you don't feel their presence after you call upon them, don't take it personally. They might be busy, or maybe it's just not a good fit. The gods are either aligned with us and are willing to work with us—or they aren't. If the energy just isn't right, they'll move on, or you'll move on. If a god remains absent and you never receive a confirming sign, try calling upon a different deity.

Refusal or Conditional Acceptance

Some gods will refuse to work with you or will only work with you on their terms. In these cases, it's likely that something about the energy between you two just isn't right. My favorite example of refusal and conditional acceptance is pretty comical, but it really happened.

One time, I thought it would be funny to invite Thor to hang out with me while I lifted weights. It was after I felt the presence of Artemis while out on a run, and I had decided to write an article about working out with the gods. I invited him to join me while pumping some iron. Immediately, I felt a manly presence in the room and smelled something... pungent. Thor disappeared almost as instantly. I was left with the feeling that he was not amused. I shrugged it off. We're very different, he and I, and we probably aren't compatible. It was the first time I'd ever called upon him too, and, truth be told, it was probably not the best introduction.

Weeks later, I was writing an article about meeting the Norse goddess Hel when I started feeling tired. I decided to stop writing until the next day, when I could look at my draft with fresh eyes. As I got up to leave, I felt Thor's masculine presence again. It felt as if his hand were on my chest, preventing me from leaving my office. Intuitively, I knew he wanted me to finish the article. Thor and I made a bargain—I'd finish the article that night in exchange for a gift of courage and strength from him. He agreed to it immediately and vanished. I finished the article, and shortly afterward, his gift manifested. I haven't seen him since. Even though our energies don't work very well together, we were able to compromise on that one occasion.

Performing Chores

Another problem that can be encountered with the gods is that some of them may give you a never-ending list of chores. This is often seen in fairy tales in which, for example, someone must search for a needle in a haystack or separate grains of rice from grains of wheat. I never believed this was actually a thing that could happen until it happened to me.

When I first approached Hekate in ritual, she showed up, but she seemed reluctant to work with me. I asked what I could give her to represent her on my altar.

Give me a key, she said in a soft voice.

I agreed to do it. For the next month, I searched for a key worthy of her. It had to be perfect. Finally, I found it. It had a heart shape at the top and three prongs at the bottom. It was gorgeous, and I thought she'd love it. Two weeks later, at my next ritual, I presented it to her.

Hekate seemed standoffish. *Paint it black,* she said.

I was surprised to hear her say that. I didn't have any black paint. I'd have to buy some. But she was adamant.

And so, a few days after that ritual, I obtained some black paint. I painted the key black and waited until the next ritual. Then, when I proudly gave her the black key, I was ready to move past the formalities and into a friendship. However, Hekate was still as firmly closed as a locked door, despite the black key.

Bring me an acorn, she said.

I was starting to feel as if she were giving me the runaround. But nonetheless, over the next few weeks, I found an oak tree and the perfect little acorn. Well... can you guess what she said at the ritual when I presented it to her?

Paint it black.

I'm happy to say that this back-and-forth dialogue ended after this point. Hekate was testing my devotion, but my determination won out in the end. I painted the acorn black, and she let down her guard. Now, we work together on a regular basis.

If you're getting a list of chores from a deity, consider how committed you are to working with them. Do you really want to work with a taskmaster? After all, a deity who has a chore for you probably has several more. Are they

worth it? Are you worthy of them and their tasks? Only your ability to do the chores will tell.

Lack of Balanced Energies

If you only work with peaceful deities and spirits, this can be a gentle, unfolding process, but your life could lack adventure and challenge. Your spiritual path could trend toward passivity and inaction even when more empowered actions are better suited for some situations. Likewise, if all your gods enjoy war, or if all the spirits you work with are baneful, they can empower you to believe in yourself, speak out, and get magical justice, but they could also make you feel battle-scarred and bitter. Too much fighting energy could leave you feeling rough, worn-out, and tired.

It's important to evaluate whether you're happy with the energies you're bringing forth into the world. Is your practice empowering in all respects? Consider the harmony in worshipping a deity known for peace alongside a deity known for war. It's possible that those two gods' combined energy is greater than the sum of their parts, enabling you to be your strongest *and* most vulnerable self. The synthesis of the two could win the war better than fighting or peace alone. In the same vein of thinking, working with your guardian spirit alongside baneful spirits could be your ticket toward true empowerment and justice. Entertain the notion of working with the opposite of your current practice to balance your spiritual growth and learn what your blind spots are. In this way, you'll be more balanced and self-actualized, and your practice will be stronger.

The Intuitive Pagan

Working with the gods can be incredibly rewarding; however, it's a lot like making a new friend. We rarely encounter them on the couch, in the car, or at the mall. We must make altars for them and invite them into our homes. We must go outside and visit places that are sacred to them. We must call their names out loud, court them, and listen for their soft voices. We must give offerings, give our time, and also our energy. When we show them that we care, we'll begin to see the fruits of our labors. It may take time, and you may get it wrong sometimes. That's okay. Just hang in there. You'll find your way with whichever god is best for you.

As an intuitive witch, you may find yourself worshipping from only one pantheon, or you may work with gods from all over the world. You might honor only one god or goddess, two, or several. Maybe you'll have one or two principal deities and several other supporting members. Do whatever feels right. Whatever draws you in intuitively will be the spiritual work that feeds you best.

Further Reading List

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Trzaskoma, Stephen M., R. Scott Smith, and Stephen Brunet, ed. and trans. *Anthology of Classical Myth: Primary Sources in Translation.* Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2004

Chapter 7

Spirit Craft

Humankind has known about spirits since before recorded history. Many ancient cultures, including Greek, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Sumerian civilizations, believed that spirits were everywhere, as part of the natural environment. Despite many changes and developments in the world, the majority of people believe in the existence of spirits. Recently, a poll found that 75 percent of people believed in some aspect of the supernatural realms.[24]

Ask anyone if they've ever seen a spirit, and you'll likely hear a story about the time they saw a ghost. Or maybe they'll tell you about how their dead pet can still be felt jumping up on the bed. Maybe you'll hear about the time they played with faeries as a child. Almost everyone has at least one story of spirits or something unexplainable.

The term *spirit* can be difficult to define, as it can mean a vast number of different entities, each with their own traits. A spirit could be generally defined as an unseen energy with a consciousness. However you define spirits, they can be strong allies in your work. This chapter will introduce the different types of spirits you may want to work with and will also provide basic instructions on how to work with them. Be sure to read the entirety of this chapter before attempting any work with spirits. As with any magic, start small with what you're sure is safe, and work your way up from there.

24. David W. Moore, "Three in Four Americans Believe in Paranormal," *Gallup*, June 16, 2005, https://news.gallup.com/poll/16915/three-four-americans-believe-paranormal.aspx.

Types of Spirits

Ghosts

Ghosts are the disembodied spirits of people and other animals who were once living but are now deceased. I've seen enough ghosts in my lifetime to know that dying isn't the end. Some spirits have the option to stick around as ghosts long after our bodies pass away. Ghosts can remain in our world for quite some time—some of the oldest ghosts I've worked with have been dead for at least a hundred years. They can make themselves known in many different ways: by a feeling, a voice, a touch, a partial appearance, or a full apparition. While some appear exactly as they did when they were alive, others appear as a translucent white blur, a shadowy silhouette, or a white crystalline outline, not unlike a somewhat translucent marble statue.

Most ghosts are benign. Just because we can see them and may get a confirmation of who they were in life, it doesn't mean that they want to interact with us or that they have some message for us. It could just be a way for them to pass the time. It also doesn't mean that they want to leave this earthly plane. Many ghosts are exactly where they want to be, and they might just want to be left alone. If a ghost isn't bothering you, it's probably okay to let them be.

However, not all ghosts have your best interests at heart. Some were cruel in life and continue that tendency after death. They may try to take energy from you or cause trouble in the hopes of making you move out of "their" home or to make you stop doing some action that's offensive to them.

Another kind of ghost you may encounter is a fractured soul of someone who was highly traumatized in life. The disturbed splinter of a spirit can remain in place, where bad things happened, as a kind of ghost or emotional imprint.

If a ghost is causing problems or draining your energy, it should be dealt with early on. Treat it as you would any malicious being. For more information on that, read on to the end of this chapter.

Ancestral Spirits

Some of the ghosts I work with are my ancestors. Generally, ancestor spirits are helpful and want to see you succeed in life. After all, you're the product of their hard work and love. However, some ancestor spirits could have strict old-fashioned morals and may not be open to working with witches. Others

could be stubborn, unhappy, or just plain mean. It helps to be picky about which ancestors you work with. If you didn't get along well in life, you won't get along well in their afterlife. Set up an altar to honor your beloved dead, with pictures and mementos. If you don't have photos or mementos, write their names on a piece of paper and place it on the altar. Show them you love them with a bit of their favorite food or drink, and light a candle for them.

Samhain, the sabbat between the autumn equinox and the winter solstice, is the perfect time to set up an ancestral altar. During this time of the year, it's thought that the veils between the living and the dead are especially thin. This time generally falls around October 31 (observed Samhain) to November 7 (astrological Samhain) and is recognized as a day to connect with the ancestors by many cultures around the world. The first time I ever set up a Samhain altar, I got immediate responses from my ancestors. The smiles on their photographs seemed to come alive with love. Many were thrilled to be invited into my home. They loved the food I'd set out, and also the black coffee, which was a favorite of my grandparents. My altar for my beloved dead became like a family reunion with those people who loved me.

Commune with your ancestors on a regular basis, whether that's during the full moon, in your daily practice, or once a week. Listen to their messages and write them down in your book of shadows. Their wisdom can be extremely helpful.

Higher Self

Some people might think that your higher self shouldn't be included in the list of spirits, but I disagree. Your higher self is your own spirit. It can be thought of as the "soul of the soul" and is the main participant in your rituals and spiritual workings. The higher self can be easily accessed after raising higher spiritual energy. Consult it through meditation, by opening the crown chakra, and by asking questions and listening for the answer. The higher self can strengthen your intuition and realizations through insight and wisdom.

Spirit Guides

Spirit guides, also known as guardian spirits, are beneficial energetic beings. They could be thought of as angels; however, they're not tied to any one religion. Because they work with the energies of the universe, they're some of the

best spirits that can provide assistance. They help with divination, protection, manifestation and desires, all energy work, and healing. These spirits usually feel wise, expansive, serene, light, and loving. If you played with an invisible friend as a child, it may have been a spirit guide. You may also have dreams about them. It's possible to have more than one spirit guide, especially if you're dealing with big life changes. Our ancestors may fill this role as well.

I first encountered my spirit guide when I was in my early twenties. I accidentally slipped into the astral realm and saw an oversized, crystalline, human-shaped being who held me as if I were a baby. He told me his name and that he was my guardian spirit. I still work with him to this day and call upon him in ritual.

Spirit guides are protectors, teachers, mentors, and friends. Many witches call out to guardian spirits at the elemental or directional quarters when they cast a circle. Call upon yours in practice, ritual, and whenever you need more confidence and guidance.

Muse Spirits

If you're a creative person, you may have attracted a muse spirit. The ancient Romans called this a *genius*. They believed that successful creative people were affected by spirits who inspired them to create masterpieces.[25] All kinds of creative people can have muse spirits, including musicians, writers, painters, dancers, and more. They're particularly helpful if you want to go deep into your creative work. They help you get to the heart of the matter, illuminating problems and providing solutions. They also assist with stamina and the will to spend hours on a single creative task. However, beware of having too-high standards. They have a tendency to drive people to perfection and enable people to forgo sleep, food, and human contact to achieve the masterpiece.

These spirits can take on many shapes, including human, humanoid, and animal. I've seen my writing muse from the corner of my eyes—always when I'm doing my best work. He appears as a large humanoid raven, with a beak and black feathers, but with a more human body. When I look directly at him, he vanishes, but once I look away, he reappears in the corner of my eye again.

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25. "We Take a Look at the Etymology Behind the Word 'Genius,'" *Collins Dictionary*, July 14, 2016, https://www.collinsdictionary.com/word-lovers-blog/new/we-take-a-look-at-the-etymology-behind-the-word-genius,304,HCB.html.

The more I pay more attention to him in that side-vision sight, the larger he appears. I've never heard him speak, but I do receive inspiration and insight from him. We often trade smiles and knowing nods when I write something particularly clever.

When the muse speaks to you, it may sound like your own inner voice, or it can be like a flash of inspiration. Many times, muses send insightful energy to you about something you hadn't thought of before. It can be a tug in this direction or that, opening doorways in your mind that you hadn't even realized were there.

To attract a muse, simply spend time working on your art. They will appear and inspire you to greater depths. To deepen your relationship with them, create an image of their likeness and hang it in your studio or office. Acknowledge them in your works and give them thanks after an especially long session or a great insight. Muse spirits don't seem to need offerings as much as other spirits—they just want you to continue being creative.

Familiar Spirits

While spirit guides and guardian spirits will help you like parents and mentors (guiding and guarding), familiars work with you as if they were your best friends. You'd be hard pressed to get your guardian spirit to help you hex someone, but your familiar will be on board. They're not animal spirits or corporeal animals, contrary to common belief. This confusion may have some truth because familiar spirits often take on the form of an animal or a humanoid.

To attract a familiar, work within a circle of protection and ask for a familiar who will benefit you and who wants your highest good. Wait until you feel a presence, then converse with them and build a friendship. Take it slow with them. Build trust and confirm what they say before progressing the relationship into anything beyond superficial. Their voice will sound like your inner voice but different. They'll use words, phrasings, and accents that are not your own. You may see them, or you may not. Sometimes, they may appear as the same spirit but wear different guises. This could be to make themselves look more like you or more human. If you've built trust, ask them to show you their real form.

Animal Spirits

Several years ago, I adopted a particularly wonderful cat. Unfortunately, I had to leave him behind with my sister for an extended period of time to pursue a dream of fire dancing across the country. But even when I was hundreds of miles away from him, my beloved cat appeared in the corner of my eyesight at times, checking up on me.

If you have a close relationship with an animal, you're probably connected with them in the spiritual realm too. There's also a good chance we're still connected with our pets after they pass.

Deceased companion animals can be called upon in a ritual to assist with work. They can also protect your house, cleanse the place of negative energy, and guard the perimeter.

Nature Spirits

Animism is the belief that spirits and intelligence reside in all natural objects and places. The belief in "spirits of the land" is found in most ancient cultures and several modern ones as well. The term *nature spirits* is an umbrella term for a wide variety of species of spirits, including spirits for natural objects, such as different types of herbs, trees, flowers, crystals, rocks, and fungi; spirits for different elements, such as earth, fire, water, and air; and also spirits for entire ecosystems and environments, such as forests, deserts, mountains, oceans, lakes, streams, and springs. Although these spirits are obviously very different, they've all been lumped together under the term *nature spirits*. This is sort of like calling humans, lions, birds, goats, turtles, eels, and sharks "animals." It technically works, and we share some characteristics, but it's a vast category, and each species has different features, strengths, abilities, and ecosystems.

Nature spirits can be extremely shy, but they can also be open to communicating with people. Have patience with them. Shy spirits will likely open up once they know you're not a threat and after repeated offerings. They'll only work with you if they wish, though, and usually only on their terms. Under no means should you ever try to coerce one. These spirits can become tricksters, and will gleefully hide your belongings, sour your milk, trip you up, and make you fear going outside. They particularly like to prank people who easily become enraged or bewildered just to watch them get angry. It's thought that they only prank people who deserve it, but honest people can find themselves

on the wrong side of a nature spirit attack as well. This is because we may not always know how we crossed them. If you experience any negative consequences, reevaluate your practices and make some positive changes.

To try to gain the favor of the spirits of the land, there are a few different methods. Express respect and admiration of the natural world whenever possible through your energetic expression. Make offerings such as honey, fruit, alcohol, or cake. Create a haven for insects, plants, birds, and other animals that inhabit your yard or area, even if you only have room for a few pots of flowers on your balcony. Plant different herbs or other plants you want to work with. Put out a hummingbird feeder or fresh water for birds. Water and fertilize your living plants, and refrain from using pesticides or insecticides. Place decorations outside that the nature spirits might like, such as figurines, ribbons, a shiny coin, pretty rocks, or chimes. Pick up trash in natural places. Put a natural object such as an herb, a pinecone, or a crystal on prominent display on an altar and admire it often. Appeal to the spirits' higher sentiments through your charming words or a spell.

Once you gain the favor of the nature spirits, you can ask them for small favors. You could ask them to serve as protectors of your land. To do so, give them a particularly nice offering, then call upon them and ask them for their assistance. You can call upon them in ritual to be present in your rites. You can exchange energy with them. You can mix different nature spirits' energies together for magic. For example, combine items such as rose quartz, yarrow, and cinnamon together in a bag as a love charm—it synergizes those spirits. Together, they help you obtain a specific harmonious vibration that can assist you with your magic.

Animism may be used as a main intuitive practice, and it can be used alongside other practices and belief systems as well. While there's no certainty that nature spirits will work with you, it's worth trying so you can reap the benefits.

Faery or Fae

If nature spirits are spirits of the land, fae could be considered "spirits who are not of this land." To put it another way, nature spirits represent the four classic elements of earth, air, water, and fire, while fae embody the invisible fifth element—spirit. Like nature spirits, they're also ubiquitous to all cultures. You may have heard of the pixies, brownies, and goblins of Europe; the Middle

Eastern jinn or genies; the Icelandic elves; and the Greek nymphs to name a few. Their realm exists alongside ours on a higher, spiritual plane.

Many of the fae are benign. If you've gained favor with nature spirits, the fae will likely warm to you as well. They can be very generous to people they see as protectors of the land and benefactors. If you invite them to do so, the fae will enter your living space and coexist with you. Set up an altar to them and leave offerings so they'll visit and leave good energy behind. They like a clean space, so be sure to clean often, both physically and energetically.

However, not all fae are kind spirits. If you encounter trickster fae, use your intuition to make amends for what you did wrong. You may have to apologize or give some act of service, such as cleaning up litter. There are also malevolent fae who are reputed to punish others. Apologies and amends can go a long way with them as well. If it isn't a personal matter, a general rule is to not challenge them. Simply let their energy pass without interaction. They have their own agendas—many don't want to trifle with humans unless a punishment is warranted.

Call upon the fae in ritual and practice. Give them the same offerings as you would give nature spirits, or use your intuition to feel out what gifts they wish to receive from you. When you feel their presence, speak honestly and from your heart. They appreciate an earnest supplicant and can bestow gifts including prolonged youth, beauty, health, luck, abilities, wisdom, and wealth. An alliance with them can accelerate spiritual growth and success.

Malicious Spirits

Not all spirits are good, but, hey, some witches are into that. Malicious spirits can work wonders with hexes and curses, if that's your thing. They can even break curses and hexes. However, working with potentially malicious beings is a serious endeavor. It should only be undertaken by advanced practitioners.

Malicious spirits aren't difficult to summon. In fact, any kind of vengeful or negative thinking will attract these beings. Beware—there's a concept of "sticky energy" when it comes to baneful magic and working with malicious spirits. They can make depressed people even more unhappy. Break free from this kind of thinking early to stop the spirits from siphoning your energy. Keep your thoughts positive so you don't feed the demons. If you feel unsafe, get protection. Cast a house protection spell or create a home ward. Cleanse your

energy and banish the spirit. The last section of this chapter will have more information about how to do this.

Throughout my time, I've never had an inkling to work with them. That being said, to each their own. Some witches will find malicious spirits exactly to their liking. Anyone interested in working with them should be exceptional at protecting themselves and their energy. They should read many books about the subject and should study with someone whom they trust unconditionally.

RITUAL

AN OFFERING TO NATURE SPIRITS OR THE FAE

When you are in a great state of mind, pack an offering for nature spirits (such as honey, a pretty rock, or fragrant herbs) and take it to a beautiful natural place. When you reach an area of particularly enchanting beauty, sit down. Feel the energy of the land and resonate with it, attuning your vibration to match it. After a couple of minutes, you should be able to feel something new—the energy of the unseen spirits there. It might feel playful or like happiness, curiosity, or wonder. Smile sweetly to show them you intend them no harm. Set your offering on the ground or at the base of a nearby tree. Tell them in return for a pleasant rest at their lovely place, you have an offering for them. Linger a little longer, feeling the energy and accepting any gifts they give you. Before leaving, send them a little gratitude.

Working with Spirits

All the aforementioned spirits have a reputation of working with humans to one degree or another. This section deals with sensing spirits, summoning them, engaging with them, protection, and commonly encountered problems.

Sensing Spirits

Sensing spirits is different from sensing the gods. For most people, the gods can be felt energetically, with their presence. Spirits are often more vague. You may need to adjust your frequency to connect with them. Most people can see spirits more clearly than they can see the gods, though, and different spirits appear differently. Some appear in the corners of your eyes, when you're not looking in their direction. Seeing them might best be described as a combination of seeing

with both the mind's eye and with one's physical eyes. Sometimes, spirits appear in our presence or in our paths and wait to see if we notice them. Some want to be seen, but others don't. As mentioned previously, they can take on many forms, including shadowy silhouettes, marble-like figures, a point of light, a living person, a crystalline human form, an animalistic spirit, and much more.

Spirits may or may not appear when called upon, especially ghosts. It makes sense—flaking out is a very human kind of thing. It may take other spirits time to respond: for example, the shy nature spirits. Unless you're a medium, most spirits communicate in a manner similar to how the gods speak. They can sound like a voice in your head that doesn't sound like your own voice and have similar phenomena as with the gods. You'll probably find that it's easiest to commune with one of your beloved dead, such as your deceased dog or grandmother. When you're working with unknown spirits, approach with respect and caution. You may also want to have some kind of protection, such as an enchanted charm or a spirit that you're certain is your ally (such as your guardian spirit or a helpful ancestor).

When you sense a spirit with good energy, say hello. Ask them why they're here, and ask if they have a message for you. Listen to what they have to say. If they speak, evaluate the information. Research the messages for confirmation. If you believe the spirit is true and kind, tell them the rules of your home. If a spirit doesn't respond, or if you don't like their energy or answer, feel free to banish them (more on that later in this chapter).

Inviting or Summoning Spirits

Extend an invitation to attract spirits from whom you do not need protection. An invitation is the politest way to include spirits who may resist being summoned because they don't wish to be under your rule. This category of spirits to invite includes nature spirits, ancestral spirits, guardian spirits, and the fae. A simple statement spoken loud and clear is the best invitation to call upon these friendly spirits. For example, "I call upon the spirits of the land to be with me. Come, if you will, and assist me with my full moon ritual." You can leave an open invitation for these spirits to be in your home by not banishing them when the ritual is over, by telling them to "stay if you will and leave if you must." To make them feel really welcome, create an altar to them and leave offerings regularly.

Beginners should only work with these spirits they don't need protection from. This list includes spirit guides, beloved dead, and a familiar who has been tested and proven to be true. This way, they can work with a team from the other side that's on their side. It's much easier to open up, feel their presence, and hear things when you don't have to worry about whether a spirit has your best interests at heart or not. This is also the perfect method to get used to the unique energies and subtle communications of spirits.

Sometimes, an invitation isn't enough of an impetus for a spirit to come, and you have to summon a spirit. This is the most desirable method for neutral, malicious, or unknown spirits, including first interactions with a potential familiar. It's preferable to have the upper hand when working with these unknown spirits. There are a few ways to summon them. The best is to call upon them in ritual in a well-constructed and protected circle. Use a confident, powerful voice: "I summon a spirit who wants my highest good and who will work with me as my familiar (or in this ritual). Come to my circle and make yourself known."

Once, for particularly big magic, I summoned multiple spirits to help me with a ritual. I wanted a huge impact, so I decided to give it a try. The results were amazing. To ensure I was protected and effective, I casted an elemental circle and then asked my guardian spirit to help. I spoke my will out loud in an intoned voice and called out for volunteer spirits to join me—only those spirits who would assist me with my will and who also wanted my highest good. Almost immediately, I felt a crowd of spirits with me in the room. The energy felt the same as if thirty people were there, standing in a circle with me! There were a few guardian spirits, fae, and elementals, but mostly, the room was packed with ghosts of all ages, origins, and time periods. I got a few impressions from them—they looked around at me and each other, ready for the magic, and excited to help because my goal aligned with theirs. At first, I was shocked at how many spirits were with me, but we worked the magic together, raised the energy into a huge vortex, and sent our will out into the world. To this day, that ritual was one of the most powerful rituals I've ever performed.

If you'd like to try to work with multiple spirits, recite a statement of intent to help keep out malicious beings. For example, "Only spirits who want my highest good and will work with me and my will may be present in this circle." Remember to release all the spirits at the end of the ritual and perform extra

grounding and self-care afterward. You may want to cleanse yourself and the ritual space as well.

Engaging with Spirits

After inviting or summoning your spirits, engage with them. Look them in the eyes and tell them why you summoned them. At this point, you can ask for their name, converse with them, ask them for assistance with divination, or ask them to perform a task for you. If they seem to be good spirits, tell them about your will and your work. Do your best to incite them to action with your words. Get them excited by telling them why you're performing the work, whether it's for justice, equality, or personal power. Tell them why it's a good idea. Try to make your will their will.

If you raise energy, raise it with the spirits involved as well. It'll feel different compared to doing it by yourself. You'll probably feel more presences in the room. Work together to raise the energy. When it reaches a peak, release it. Imagine or see in your mind's eye that all the spirits present are working together to do so.

Banishing Spirits

After a ritual or spirit work, it's time to open the circle. Thank the spirits you summoned and release them. Do not give them the option to stick around: "I release you from this circle. Fare thee well." After all spirits have been released, open your circle and cleanse the area energetically.

This is a polite way of saying goodbye, and it'll work for most spirits. However, if you feel a lingering spirit that makes you feel uncomfortable, anxious, fearful, or nervous, you need to be firmer about asking them to leave. Having good boundaries with spirits is a must. Firmly ask them to leave by banishing them: "Spirits, be gone! I banish you from my property." Mentally push out any unwanted energy from your space. Imagine the trespassing spirit landing outside your property line. Cleanse the area again and burn herbs or resins, being sure to pay attention to windows, doors, and corners. Cleanse yourself as well so the spirit doesn't "stick" to you the moment you walk out of the place.

Unfortunately, many negative entities tend to be stickier than most and may require additional work to truly be gone. This may be a good enough reason for you to not want to work with them. If you have this problem, perform

a whole house cleansing and take a salt bath. Ask your guardian spirits to assist in keeping them out. Set up more protective home wards. Cleanse yourself physically, emotionally, and mentally. Clear your mind of any undue worries. If you need additional assistance, ask a friend who knows more about spirits to assist you in an even deeper cleanse. In the future, make it a practice to be clearer about which spirits you invite or summon to your practice, and only deal with spirits you yourself can banish.

Protection

There are several ways you can protect your home from spirit intrusions. The first is with your words, by stating that "only spirits who want my highest good may be present." The second is to construct your circle well. As you cast it, imagine a protective bubble around your home or living space, with any unwanted spirits on the outside, unable to penetrate the boundary. Create spell jars for protection, or enchant a home ward to cast out trespassers (both of which were covered in chapter 4). Ask your pet to help remove negative entities from the home. Sprinkle salt on windowsills and doorways. You can also sprinkle salt on your property boundary if there isn't any surface water nearby and if you don't mind a bit of dead grass. Once a month or so, charge your wards, bottles, and boundaries to keep the energy fresh.

Common Problems When Working with Spirits

It's important to have good boundaries with the spirit world. The majority of problems with spirits relate to the need for better home protection. Most problems are easily solved with a banishing, cleansing, and more protection. But there may be times when your guard is down, or your protection isn't strong enough.

Trespassing Spirits

Trespassing spirits should never be welcomed. You wouldn't break into your neighbor's house at three in the morning and ask them for something, would you? It shows a lack of courtesy, but it happens with spirits, nonetheless. Once, I turned over in bed and saw the ghost of an old man standing nearby. I intuited that he had followed me home from my walk through the cemetery the day before. He said he wanted my help with something. I cut him off and banished him

out of my home. If he thought breaking and entering my home and disturbing my sleep was okay, who knows what else he'd do? It's possible he'd bring his friends over and have a party, or maybe even siphon off some of my energy. The next morning, I cleansed my house and put up a few more barriers. I'm glad to say he hasn't been back.

Trickster Spirits

There will also be times when it's unclear whether a spirit is there for your greatest good or not. Trickster spirits will tell you anything in the hopes of being able to stick around. Recently, I encountered a spirit who told me she was my great-great grandmother, whom I coincidentally knew nothing about. The spirit told me information that seemed too good to be true. After listening to what she had to say, I told her that if the information was verifiable, we could talk again, and then I banished her. After investigating my ancestral tree a little more, I discovered that the information she gave me was completely false. It was a trickster spirit, probably trying to find someone to fool so she could take their energy. It's important to be skeptical of the information spirits give us. Question everything—the things that are good, and the things that are bad. We shouldn't believe everything spirits say just because there's a line of communication open. It's sort of like a phone. Anyone could call you and tell you anything.

Spirit Portals

The worst problem I had with spirits was when a friend of mine invited spirits into our house by intentionally opening a spirit portal in her bedroom. I think she believed this was a spiritual thing to do, but it definitely was not. Spirit portals are tears in the fabric of the universe, and they act like bus stations. Any spirit can come and go as they please, and all kinds of spirits pass through. Soon, the house will start accumulating spirits who were banished from their old homes and are looking for a new place to live.

I first noticed something was wrong at that house because I was perpetually drained of energy. My joy of living had left me, and my mood was always sour. I started noticing shadows lurking in a few of the corners, and then nearly every corner. I thought it was my imagination for a while, but when I saw a shadowy figure lying in my bed, looking at me with a saucy grin, I had

no choice but to acknowledge what was happening. We had an infestation of spirits.

If you see spirits everywhere and feel drained or in a bad mood, it's possible that a spirit portal has been opened somewhere nearby. You'd be smart to deal with it immediately or leave the premises until you or someone stronger can close it. Closing a spirit portal is a draining business, and it can take several hours to cleanse a house entirely, depending on how big it is. Cleansing the house will help for a little while, as the spirits escape back through the portal, but soon enough, the cleansing will age, and spirits will venture into the house again.

If you want to try to close a portal, you'll first want to make sure you have cleansing items such as salt and sage or other burnable herbs. Wear whatever makes you feel grounded and powerful. For me, this means wearing darker colors and carrying hematite, black tourmaline, and garnet. Next, identify where the portal is located. This area will have the lowest energy in the whole house. They're often in basements, but they could be anywhere, even outside. You may see more spirits and shadows in this area as well.

Summon your protective spirits and deities. Tell them what you want to do and ask them for help. Just like sealing the circle when leaving to retrieve something you've forgotten, you'll need to seal the "curtains" of energy that are open. Do this by using your hands to seal the tear, starting at the rift at the top, with one hand on the left and one on the right. Bring your hands together, feeling the elastic pull of the fabric. Send energy from your hands to seal or meld the layers together. With your mind's eye, see the left and right sides come together and form a ridge where they meet, like a scab. It's okay if it looks rough or bumpy. Keep stretching the fabric and sealing until you reach the bottom. If you need to invoke your deities for extra strength, do so.

After you've sealed the portal this way, you may need to take a short break at this point to ground and shake off any excess energy. When you feel well enough, go over the scab with your hands again, sending energy that makes the seam grow stronger and flatten out. The scab will start to look like the rest of the energy nearby. Go over the entire scab with your hands at least two times, resealing and flattening it out. Once the area feels more normal, cleanse yourself, and then cleanse the entire house, taking your time with each room. Waft the burning herbs into every corner, over every mirror, over every window and

door, on the ceiling, on the floor, and in the middle space of the room. You can't be too careful. Sprinkle salt in the corners of each room to neutralize any negative energy lurking there. Speak your banishing intentions as you cleanse. Afterward, ground yourself with food and a salt bath, if possible. If this kind of work doesn't sound suited for you, seek assistance from someone stronger. There's no shame in getting help from a stronger witch, and you may learn from them as well. Be willing to gift them cash or trade services for their time and energy.

In extreme cases where closing a spirit portal isn't possible, moving out may be the only option. This is why it's important to evaluate the energetic contributions of housemates and visitors. If they bring potentially negative influences into your space, either cleanse after they leave or ask them to leave their chaos outside your home.

Spirit Possession

Involuntary spirit possession is a very rare occurrence that happens when an entity has more power than the person being possessed and can influence or take over a body. Sometimes, this occurs without a person's awareness, as with someone who is extremely mentally ill. Mediums can allow a spirit to possess them to let the spirit talk. When this happens, the spirit usually doesn't have total control, but can influence mood and energy levels. If you believe involuntary spirit possession may be happening to you or a loved one, banish the spirit, then ground and cleanse. Set up more protection around the home. If it continues, seek external assistance.

Poltergeists

Poltergeists, or psychokinetic occurrences, are even more rare. I've only ever seen a couple of these. The first was in the presence of someone in need of psychiatric care, and the second was with someone extremely stressed. Poltergeist spirits are attracted to those kinds of people because they can feed on the chaos and negativity. Poltergeist spirits can also be created when someone experiences extreme trauma or a mental breakdown, and part of their soul breaks off. This is like a shadow but way more intense because of the nature of the traumatic way it was caused. In these cases, eruptions of energy are caused

by the friction between the part of the soul that wants to reintegrate and the person who cannot bear to face it.

If you feel that you can't banish an offending spirit with words, herbs, salt, and your power, find someone who can help. People who are stronger witches, mediums, or holy people can banish and exorcise unwanted spirits. And, of course, don't work with those spirits again.

Delving Further into Spirit Work

However you choose to work with spirits, know that they're there. Some are waiting to help you and want to be heard. Others are not so helpful. Part of being a good intuitive witch is knowing which are the good ones and which are the bad. Speaking with spirits and banishing the bad ones is another one of those witch arts that gets easier the more you practice it.

If this chapter has piqued your interest, look into more advanced books about spirit craft to learn more. Try to find a teacher to help you understand your experiences and develop your abilities.

RITUAL

WORKING WITH BENEFICIAL SPIRITS FOR PROTECTION

Cast a circle, then invite your spirit guide to be present. When the energy shifts and you feel their presence, converse with them and ask them for protection. Listen to what they have to say about what you can do to protect your home. Thank them and release them. In the same circle, invite your beloved dead to the circle and repeat the process. Finally, invite your familiar in and repeat the process. Close the circle and perform the work they asked you to do. Do the work they suggest. Reflect on how their energies felt different.

The next time you want to work with spirits, summon all of them at once. Feel how different it feels with all of them there at once. Tell them you did the work they suggested, and ask them how often you should recharge the protective measures. This exercise should help you learn which spirits can be called upon, how their presence feels, and how they communicate. Call upon these spirits in other rituals according to your intuition.

Further Reading List

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Chapter 8

Making the Mundane Magical

There's no doubt that the mundane world affects us every day. It rules how much freedom and time we have, certain necessary interactions, and how much money we have in our pockets. The mundane aspects of life, including the places we live and work, can affect us and our energy frequencies immensely. They might also influence how we feel when we wake up, arrive at work, and play, as well as after we're no longer in those places. Identifying energy drains in your mundane world is important because quick fixes will only go so far.

Fortunately, when we work with energetic frequencies and practice witchcraft, popular reality can become slightly warped. Just as I experienced a higher energetic state in my second fire walk and had a completely different outcome, when we clear our emotional dramas and establish healthy and vibrant energy in our lives, we attract more uplifting experiences. We also become more resistant to the "burns," or negative parts of everyday life.

Everyone experiences the world differently, with unique ethics, needs, desires, reactions, and energies. In some ways, you might even entertain the notion that everyone has their own miniature realities that intersect with other people's realities within the mundane world. We experience friction or problems when these two bump up against each other and don't meet eye to eye. This is an uncomfortable process, but it's how progress is made. These challenges can make us more aware of what we will and won't entertain.

As witches and pagans, we notice things that others don't and experience the world on a more phenomenal level. We see the tree inside of the seed and the healer inside the child. As we practice more and become more magical, some of our problems can be transformed into challenges to stay true to our intuition. If we can do this, our mundane worlds can become more magical. The best question you can ask yourself when thinking about these isn't how limited you are, but rather how much you can work with the mundane world and popular reality to make your life more magical. This chapter contains magical solutions to common mundane problems, options for interacting with others, and ways to transcend the influence of popular reality. It also provides a few ways you can make a difference. With a little work, you may never look at the mundane world the same way again.

Mundane World, Magical Home

Your home should be a safe place where you can rest, experience peace, create, work your magic, and truly be yourself. It should facilitate your atmosphere by being a sanctuary for your body, mind, and soul. Ideally, your home will also nourish your creativity and enliven your spirit. This may mean that it's full of inspiration, from beautiful altars to good music, with comfy places to rest and inspirational images hanging on the walls. Having a home like this will recharge your spirit so you can face the world with confidence. It will also assist you in reaching your goals and help you live life on a deeper level.

If your home feels something like that, you're on the right path. Keep doing whatever you're doing! But, if your home isn't so great, it's time to invest in yourself. People spend more time at home than any other place, so you deserve one that supports you. Think of your home as an energetic entity that feeds you the energy you need. What changes could you make to let your home feel better energetically (physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually)? Maybe you need physical comforts such as a sofa or a new bed, or a deep clean and purge of the things that you no longer need. Maybe you need emotional support: an animal companion can give you love and affection and can help make your house truly feel like a home. Perhaps you need a boost in mental energy, and a computer desk would help you exchange ideas with people over the internet. Or maybe you need a spiritual fix, and you should finally set up that altar you've been thinking about. Whatever it may be, you don't have to spend

a lot of money. Some of the best things are free or repurposed. See if you can manifest what you desire. Ask for what you need and see if anyone is willing to donate it to you.

If you live in a neighborhood with a lot of crime, trash, and noise or if your housemates are incompatible, you need more than just a little upgrade. There are a few things you can do to make your home more magical. You can cast protection spells, set up home wards, and cast camouflage spells outside to make people wander by your residence without looking at it too much. You could also worship a hearth goddess such as Hestia, make a peace spell for the home as well as protective home wards, burn herbs regularly to cleanse negative energy, and draw sigils on your doors and windows to keep out bad spirits.

However, if you don't feel safe in your home or neighborhood, these are "quick fixes" to a much deeper problem. When you're inside your magical home, you'll feel fine. But eventually, you'll leave the house and walk through those troubling areas, and they'll affect you. Clearing away all the icky energy on a continual basis can drain your energetic resources. The energy it takes to regularly discard the negative energy and maintain the positive can wear you out, especially if the causes of the problems can't be fixed.

If you don't feel safe, moving out might be for the best. A bit of hard work now can make your life easier later. But, as someone who has lived in those conditions from time to time, I know those options aren't always available. If that's the case, hang in there and use whatever magical options you have until you can move out.

EXERCISE

CLEANSE YOUR HOME

Every witch should cleanse their home on a regular basis. Obtain some burnable herbs or incense for energetic cleansing. Starting at a door, light the materials on fire. Once they're smoldering, waft the smoke over you and then the door. Move counterclockwise through each room, being sure to get corners, windows, and doors. Spiral in tighter in each room, then get the ceiling and floor. Move on to the next room until you're finished with the entire house. Afterward, notice the energetic shift. Your home will feel more relaxed and magical. Repeat this deep cleanse whenever you notice the energy is bad, or perform a light

cleanse of only a couple of rooms on an as-needed basis. You'll especially want to cleanse after having a houseguest whose energy isn't resonant with yours.

Magical People, Mundane Jobs

You might think that your job has nothing in common with your magical life whatsoever, but this is probably not the case. A lot of us have jobs for which our magical skills aren't in our position descriptions, but we use our skills there nonetheless. I know a pagan medic who uses his energy to calm people down at a time when they need it the most. One of my druid friends is an environmental scientist and views her job as being a steward of the earth. A friend of mine who works as a makeup artist uses a bit of glamor to make himself more alluring to potential clients. When I was a barista in Seattle, I offered people a little bit of magic in every shot of espresso, which their higher self could either accept or refuse.

It's also important to realize that the job you have now may not be your job forever. A bit of magic now can help bridge the gap until you find that job. Use rituals to increase your concentration, abilities, and self-esteem so that you'll sparkle with eligibility for a promotion or an interview somewhere else. Try to manifest your dream job by doing what you love and getting good at it.

In the meantime, are there any other changes you can make in your company to create a better community or world? Think locally and about the big picture. Use your magic to make the workplace better and to improve morale. Start a recycling bin to encourage your coworkers to think about the earth. Set up a charity fundraiser to get people thinking about others worse off than themselves. Smooth over tension with a grumpy coworker with a sweeten spell (which you can find later in this chapter). There are so many little things you can do that add up to a more magical work environment.

Witchy Solutions to Mundane Problems

The mundane world may never be the ideal world we envision. Unfairness and inequality will continue to occur. People can be discourteous and mean. But that doesn't mean it should get us down. This section is about rethinking mundane problems and putting them into a witchy context, where anything is possible.

Low-Energy Fixes versus Magical Fixes

The mundane world deals with a lot of vibrational energy frequencies on the low and medium part of the spectrum. As we discussed in chapter 2, low energy isn't bad—it's a necessary part of life. Sometimes, having low energy means we need a snack or some sleep. But there's a more serious version of low energy, which includes long-term feelings of restlessness or emotional exhaustion. In those cases, you'll need to rest, heal and take steps to raise your vibration again. There are two basic solutions for this: a mundane and a magical.

The mundane fix to correct low energy frequencies is to isolate and numb oneself with rich food, alcohol, and mindless entertainment. This can be a pleasant distraction for a short time, but it merely pauses the problem. The cause of the low vibration is usually still there when we awaken from a numbing experience. Freezing out pain can be a slippery slope. Those actions could become addictive and demand that the fix become bigger, more pleasurable, or longer. Continuously unplugging can perpetuate a cycle of not dealing with the sources of problems, only the effects of them. This can dull energy awareness and can create closeted emotions, or shadows.

The basic magical cure to fix low-energy problems is to view them as opportunities to make positive changes in your life. Having continually low energy frequencies may mean we need an energetic overhaul. Maybe it's time to dump out the old and take in new ideas and experiences. Perhaps we need something or someone new and exciting in our lives or a new possibility. Use your intuition to create magical practices and rituals that release stagnant energies, replenish your emotional energy levels, and help you to break free from those nonempowering cycles. Try connecting with friends when you feel burned out, or try reading a book about self-improvement. Go to therapy. Take a walk. Be honest with yourself about what works and what doesn't. Any of these activities will put you in a place of power instead of merely wanting to escape from an oppressive situation. And if you can't change a situation, you can change how you view it, at least some of the time. A perspective shift can save you vast amounts of emotional energy.

Look for the Window of Opportunity

One way to make positive changes in your life is to look for the energetic window of opportunity. There will be times when our actions or requests are better

received by the world than other times. These golden moments are known as windows of opportunity. Looking for this window is an advanced energy concept in which you wait for the right moment for yourself and others before taking any actions. To use this concept, pay attention to the energy at hand. Feel your energy and the energy of the other person or thing. If your energy feels rushed or impulsive, don't act—at least not yet. It's not the right time to contact them. If your desire to take action is coming from a place of fear, or another negative emotion like neediness or greed, that may be the problem. Similarly, if the energy of the other is saying "not yet" or feels blocked, it's not the right time. It's likely you'll receive a better answer if you wait to take action until when it feels right instead of on impulse or at the first available time. You'll know the time is right because it will feel easy and receptive on both ends. The energy may feel relaxed, positive, and possibly even a little excited.

Follow the Thread

Following your intuition can also be like picking a thread out of the world that leads you in the direction you want to go. If you have an intent, state it aloud. Look around in your mind's eyes to see what invisible threads are available to you. My threads appear as red ribbons or black yarn most of the time. Yours might be something different. Choose from the threads that present themselves to you. If it's not clear which one to take, feel the vibration of each thread and choose the one that feels like the energy of the direction you want to go.

Use Magic for Common Problems

Use magic to make your mundane life better. If you live in an area that has few parking spaces and many cars, and you often find yourself in need of a parking space, why not use magic? You could create a charm to help you, recite an invocation, or envision an empty space right where you like to park. Try magical solutions for your mundane problems and see what works. You might be amazed at the effectiveness.

Use Your Words

We witches can bend reality and warp things to a certain degree using magic, but it only goes so far. There are times when we need to stand in our power and use our words. Chapter 3 discussed the power of words and how the

written and spoken word command so much more power compared to our thoughts alone. It's important to be able to speak out about what we want and what we don't want, or what's fair and what's not fair. To put more power behind your words so they're heard and understood, use a little vocal intonation. While speaking up for ourselves isn't necessarily magical, it can help us create boundaries and more of the life we want, which is magical indeed.

Transmute Problems

Transmutation means to transform something to a more enlightened or higher state. It's a witchy hack to solve smaller problems. Here's an example: You could go to therapy and hash out every single problem you've ever had, what happened, why it happened, how it felt, and what it meant. After several hours of thoroughly dissecting them, you can put your story back together and hopefully change how you feel about it. Or you can simply change how you feel about your past. You can see that people did their best, and life was hard for them, so they made bad choices sometimes. Perhaps those people are just dumb or cruel by nature, and they don't care about others. It's also possible that some incident wasn't intended to be personally damaging to you.

Transmutation isn't meant to dissuade anyone from therapy or to belittle real problems or bad situations; rather, it's a way to change how you see the little problems in life. It isn't recommended for people who tend to check out and escape their problems, either. A false transmutation (or ignoring a problem) can create shadows and more problems. Additionally, not every problem can be or should be transmuted. Some problems need to be laid flat and seen as they are before moving on is an option.

Save Your Energy

Pick your battles. If you allow yourself to be triggered and get dragged into low emotional energy on insignificant matters, it's time to realize that this reaction doesn't help you. Don't waste your energy getting frustrated about little things, like someone not using a turn signal or forgetting to say thank you. If we all got frustrated about all the little things, we'd have very little energy to better ourselves and the world. Instead of reacting to every little slight, save your energy for more important things, like the people you care about.

Don't Forget Physical Tasks

Our lives won't always be spent in blissful ritual and meditation. We still need to wash dishes, make money, and pay the bills. To expect otherwise is to live a life that could quickly crumble into tragedy. See chores as the benefits of living a spiritual life rather than the bane of your existence. One reason to go ahead and do those physical tasks is that negative energy tends to accumulate around clutter and messes. Stacks of dirty dishes hanging out in your sink can cause you to cringe whenever you think about cleaning them. Continually putting off washing them will make you cringe several times a day, which adds up to feelings of avoidance. Another reason to tidy up is that when we complete physical tasks, it frees us up for whatever may come next. Washed dishes and a clean kitchen can open the way for more good things to happen, like having friends over for dinner or baking cookies with your loved ones.

Magical Hobbies

Using intuitive witchcraft in your creative outlets can be extremely rewarding. Put intention and forethought into the creative process before starting. What magic can you create? How do you want people to feel? As you create and plan, feel the magic come alive. Follow it and see where it takes you. Let your spirituality inspire you and evoke creative moods.

Sometimes, my fire dancing group invokes a goddess before performing. The deity we invite changes with every performance and is always appropriate for the venue, theme, and our emotions at the time. We channel her energy into ourselves and ask that her divine expression flow through us when we perform. It helps us reach those higher, transcendent levels of performance. You could also channel deities or energy when you knit, paint, create objects, bake, write songs, or do any other hobby. Simply channel the spirit or deity you love while doing your creative act.

Other ways to infuse your spirituality into your hobbies could include using magical materials in your art. You could charge your paintbrushes to create beautiful works of art. Use moonwater for your watercolor paintings. You could write a song on an eclipse. The list is nearly endless.

Another intuitive magic you could do for your hobbies is create an altar to your creative project or ability. Use your intuition to select items for it that inspire you or feel similar to the work. For instance, a dancer could place images

of dancers who inspire them, the materials they use, such as dancing shoes, and anything that inspires them to take their art a step further, such as a painting of a deity or a bird in flight. Spell jars can be created for creativity, big goals, and also the little goals that will help you lead up to that point. Include any items that relate to your muse spirit too. Check in at this altar and show them your progress through a magical practice or ritual. You can make offerings or open a line of dialogue with the spirit of your hobby. Speak to it about what you want it to become, and listen to what it has to say. When you connect with the spiritual aspect of your hobby, you'll likely find more fulfillment than ever before.

Weather Magic

Weather magic is the art of manipulating and working with air currents and moisture. There are a few different ways to work with the weather. Some weather witches can take energy from powerful atmospheric sources in a practice known as *absorptive weather magic*. For example, they take energy from a gentle snow shower, a powerful thunderstorm, blustery winds, or warm sunshine. It's a lot like using the energy of the land. To absorb the energy of the weather, be in the present moment and experience the atmospheric conditions fully. Feel the moisture in the air (or lack thereof), the sound, the wind, and the intensity of the energy. Draw these into yourself and feel their energy course through you. Have a ritual and build it up to peak when the weather peaks, if applicable. For example, in a thunderstorm, you can count the seconds between the lightning and thunder until you're in the middle of it. Always play it safe with lightning, though, and don't be outdoors during those times. Storm magic should always be practiced in a safe space. At the peak of the weather, absorb the energy and direct it toward your goals. Release any excess energy by placing your hands on the earth or any other method. If there's no peak in the weather, raise energy using your own method.

Directive weather magic involves modifying the weather. This magic has limitations, in that you can only work with the weather that's available. For example, you won't be able to create a tropical breeze on a frozen tundra because the conditions would have to change too much. Weather witches respect the reality of current conditions and that we won't be able to control all the weather. A common weather witch saying is "sometimes, it just has to rain."

There are, however, ways to work with what's present. It's quite thrilling and can assist you when you need a certain kind of weather, such as for an outdoor wedding.

To perform directive weather magic, first consider timing. Let's say you want it to be clear and not rainy on Friday night for an outdoor event. However, you looked at the radar and saw rain is forecasted for that time. You could perform weather magic to make it rain Friday morning in an attempt to exhaust the system. If you made it rain Thursday night, that might be too early, and it might still rain Friday night. Timing is important because movement of clouds and moisture needs to happen at the right times and places.

Once you've determined the proper timing, ascertain which direction the weather is coming from. This can easily be seen by looking at a weather radar map or feeling which way the wind is blowing. Face the wind to perform your magic.

Directive weather magicians work in a few general ways. The first is through pushing pockets of air. For example, a storm coming in from the west can be pushed either northward or southward with a gust of energy from you. You could also part the clouds by sending hot energy up and out. This can be harder to maintain, though, and may be a temporary measure. Weather witches can also create a shield to protect an area or to make clouds fall on either side, sort of like an umbrella. An aerodynamic shield is the best solution for this, with a tip pointed toward the oncoming weather and a body that widens like a kite to cover the area in need of protection. Shields may need to be quite long to cover a larger area and need to be placed at the right height in the sky, sometimes with the upwind point low.

Yet another weather witchcraft is to speed up the winds by pulling them toward you. For example, if you want sunshine and it's raining, you can pull on the rainy air pocket to make it rain harder in the hopes of making it pass sooner.

The Magical World

We humans are all one race, all breathing the same air, and sharing one little green and blue planet that's spinning through a vast universe. Our bodies are composed of molecules that were once wild deer, primordial fish, water from the bottom of the ocean, molten lava, the breath of a million creatures, birds,

other people, dirt, asteroids, tears, and stars. Before that, those molecules came from all over the world and outer space, since the beginning of time. Every human is composed of this magic.

We're all related, sharing the same first ancestors. Our subsequent ancestors somehow made it through the ancient times of jungle homesteading, tribal nomadic living, ancient pagan worship and agricultural lifestyles, holy wars, feudal rule, the horrors of colonization, and the rapid developments of the last two centuries. We've arrived at the current day, when there are more possibilities than ever before to see equality and respect for all, but we still have a long, long way to go. This section explores several ways we can make the world a more magical place.

Spend Money at the Right Places

Our money can make a huge difference in the world. Whenever possible, buy from small and local businesses, fair-trade sellers, organic businesses, independent artists, and pagan or witch vendors. More money goes back into the community, much more than when you spend at a megastore. This movement encourages more local artists to develop their skills and create magical pieces of art. You'll see more local vendors and have the opportunity to purchase something truly unique. You might even become one of the local artists or vendors someday. With fairly traded items, people in other countries would have a better standard of living too.

In the end, you want to feel good about your purchases. It feels better intuitively to support fair trade, organic, and local products. Because our feelings rule so much of our lives, it's worth the extra money.

You can also spend money on experiences that will help you grow as opposed to material goods. For example, if you've always loved Odin, why not travel to the lands where he was worshiped and make an offering to him? Experience is a valuable teacher because it opens us up in ways we can't foresee.

Be an Advocate for the Environment

Disconnection from the natural world and community has been linked to ecological crises and disconnection with the self.[26] Connecting to the land is a basic

26. James Endredy, *Ecoshamanism: Sacred Practices of Unity, Power, and Earth Healing* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2005), 22–23.

part of intuitive witchcraft, but we can't stop there. The environment should be on everyone's minds, especially for those of us who work with the earth's energy on a regular basis. Every time we turn off a light or combine errand trips, we reduce energy consumption. Whenever it's possible, recycle, reduce waste, and reduce energy consumption. This is especially important because irreversible climate change is looming on the horizon. Make the environment a part of your practice and lifestyle. Purchase sustainable and local items that are grown in season. This can reduce massive amounts of carbon dioxide generated from airfare. You could also consider growing your own food, buying organic, and eating vegetarian or vegan meals more often. Since animals are one of the largest sources of greenhouse gasses, reducing the amount of animal products you consume reduces your personal carbon footprint greatly. Besides, eating cleaner and living lightly on the earth just feels better intuitively.

We also have to be careful to not litter with our magic. "Leave no trace" is a good guidepost, or, better yet, leave a place better than you found it by picking up trash. From time to time, I hear about witches who advise others to throw spell jars in a river or stream or bury them near running water. Some witches also make offerings or cast spells in the form of a released balloon or a lit candle left in the woods. Yet others stack river rocks in massive towers. All these practices could have negative implications. Leaving a candle burning in the woods could cause the whole forest to catch fire. Stacking river rocks can change the course of the river and wipe out sensitive ecosystems and animal species like the cave salamander. Your offering or disposal method could be considered littering, it could harm an ecosystem, or it could hurt someone who stepped on it. An animal could consume your offering and become sick. If you leave behind toxic or wasteful items, it can cause the nature spirits of that area to notice. If they think you're disrespecting the land, they can and will work against you, jinxing and hexing you until they think you've paid your due.

Hurting the environment should never coincide with your magic. Here are a few tips to make your intuitive witchcraft a little greener.

- ★ If you must leave something behind in nature, such as an offering or a spell jar, use completely natural objects so as not to litter or harm an ecosystem. An example of this would be a spell jar created from a hollowed-out pumpkin or a cored, organic apple.

- ★ Use nonharmful ingredients. You shouldn't leave salt, treated wood, metal, or painted objects in nature. These can leach contaminants into the environment and harm ecosystems. Likewise, draw a sigil with chalk or food-grade oil as opposed to paint, which usually contains volatile organic chemicals.
- ★ Use native, unprocessed, edible ingredients, just in case an animal eats your offering. Let your offering be a nourishing gift instead of the cause of a tummy ache or poison. A general rule of thumb is to only include ingredients you could make by yourself in nature. For example, don't leave a snack bar with preservatives, bleached white flour, and corn syrup as an offering. Instead, leave an organic apple. You could combine oats, almonds, flax seeds, and almond milk, and make a little cake from it. Don't use common allergens such as wheat, chocolate, or milk. Both your conscience and the animal that eats it will thank you.
- ★ Instead of leaving a physical offering, offer energy instead. You can sing, dance, meditate, give energy, or read poetry. These offerings are free and need little to no preparation.

Know Your Rights

Look into your religious rights for your country and know your rights. The country I live in, the United States of America, was founded on the concept of freedom of religion. It's an essential part of the First Amendment to our constitution. This means that we, as witches and pagans, have the same rights as any other religion to organize, worship, discuss, and circulate publications. We can have our own churches, raise children, hold offices, and be good employees—even though our religions don't match that of the majority of the country. In short, religious discrimination against pagans and witches is illegal.

The First Amendment also means we have freedom *from* religion. Prayer and religion can't be mandatory or promoted in public schools or other governmental places such as a courtroom or the White House. If you believe you've been discriminated against, or if someone is forcing religion in a public forum in the United States of America, the Lady Liberty League might be able to help. Based out of Circle Sanctuary headquarters in Wisconsin, they assist people who are dealing with these issues. They have lawyers who can interpret the laws and can provide counsel in legal matters. Other groups that can

help might include your local American Civil Liberties Union, the Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and the Covenant of the Goddess. If you don't live in the US, check online for information and resources local to you.

Make a Difference

One individual can and does make a difference every day. They can influence other people, who can inspire more people, which can become a movement of many people. When we practice intersectionality and empower ourselves to speak out against injustice, the world changes for the better. Just a little, but it makes a difference. Having the courage to do one good thing can act as a domino effect. The more we advocate for equality and human rights, listen to the marginalized, speak up, vote, spend wisely, and so forth, the better the world becomes.

Healing the World

Some people think that the best thing you can do to advance humankind is to further your own spiritual development. Improving oneself can improve the whole of the world. This is because our energy ripples out, changing those we encounter and uplifting them. Never underestimate the impact your kindness and awareness can have on others. However, it doesn't stop there.

Many cultures also believe that we can heal some of the problems humanity has caused with our awareness and energy work. An intuitive global healing practice can change the world, especially when it's combined with deeds as well. If you wish to participate in raising the consciousness of the world, create a meditation or an intuitive practice or ritual. Send peaceful energy to areas of the world that need it. Use your energy to help people find the light of consciousness and kindness. Send out supportive energy with the mission that it could be received by anyone with a good heart who needs it. And always back up spiritual actions like these with real-world actions such as voting, signing petitions, being a voice for equality, and more, if possible. Your work can be beneficial to healing the world.

Worldwide Connections

All around the world, witches and pagan have circles, rituals, and spiritual practices, especially on the full moon, the dark moon, and the solar sabbats. When we're in those spiritual spaces, I like to think of us as being connected somehow, as if we're tuning in to the same higher frequencies. We're like spiders on a vast web of circles across the world. It's possible we can feel each other's vibrations or share small amounts of energy in a kind of unseen symbiosis, inspiring and uplifting everyone. We can keep our circles small, or, if we wish, we can extend our connections out far and wide. The next time you're deep in a ritual, reach out beyond the circle to see if there are any other friendly witches out there doing similar work. If so, make a tiny connection to support them. If you feel a resistance to sharing energy, disengage and move on. If you feel someone else out there is especially friendly, practice energy ladders (see page 199). Be careful not to take any more energy than what you give.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

Intuition and Magical Activism

Michael M. Hughes

Combining magic and activism almost always requires the focused use of intuition. Why? Because activist rituals are not found in collections of spellbooks. After all, where can you look up a spell to stop an oil pipeline from being built through sacred land? Or a ritual to help your local progressive candidate win in a tight election? You can't. Unlike spells for love, or money, or health, you're going to have to go it alone when it comes to crafting spells for specific social or political goals.

Of course, before going any further, your magic must be part of a larger, coordinated approach to attaining your goal—that means writing letters and emails, making calls, attending public meetings, and all other nonmagical actions. Magic is just one tool in your toolkit. Use all of them!

Let's look at a simple example: a witch activist discovers that a local estuary is going to be paved over to build a strip mall. Now, if you flip through any book of spells, you're unlikely to find one entitled "Spell to Stop a Strip Mall from Being Built on a Protected Estuary." How about looking through lists

of magical correspondences? Nope. That's where your intuition is absolutely necessary.

So how do you craft a specific spell for this purpose? First, focus on your goal—to protect the estuary and stop the construction. But which feels more immediate and critical—general protection for the water, flora, and fauna or stopping the bulldozers? What does your intuition tell you? In many cases of magical activism, the danger is imminent, and the magic needs to be primarily one of resistance and defense rather than longer-term protection.

Assuming the situation is critical and your desire is to stop the immediate destruction of the area, perhaps you decide to perform a binding spell on the developer. What represents the company to you? They have a name, but do they also have a logo? Printing out their logo provides a link you can work with. Is there a color associated with their logo? You might want to use a candle of that color, maybe accompanied by a green or blue candle to represent the estuary.

Do you use tarot? What card would likely represent the estuary? The Star, with a woman pouring out water and a bird in the background, seems ideal. For a magical link to the estuary, can you visit and take some soil? Maybe you can find a feather of a native bird—that would be a powerful energetic link to the area, as would a rock, a cattail, or a container of water.

Once you have identified your goal and gathered the components of your spell, it's time to craft the words. This is another way to powerfully channel your intuition. Do you prefer spells that rhyme? Free associate and capture your intention in words, then say them aloud. Does it resonate? Does it feel magical? Polish it until it feels and sounds as perfect as you can make it.

What actions will you take during the ritual? Does burning the company logo seem appropriate, or does tying it up with thread feel more effective? Are there any components of the spell you could place at the estuary site as an added energetic impetus? If you get stuck, use a pendulum, tarot, or another divination tool to enhance your intuitive process.

Obviously, there are not concrete answers, as each ritual for magical activism will be different. The common denominator, however, is your own intuition—and properly channeled, it will guide you to powerful, personalized magic that will always be more effective than any spell you can find in a book.

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Magic Everyday

Every day when we wake up, we have the choice to go back to sleep or to use our energy to do right by ourselves and the world. Choosing to be awake in this modern world means educating ourselves on how we can improve our own lives and the lives of everyone else on the planet. It also means practicing it. Sometimes you'll use your inner spark to ground, cleanse, and recharge, or maybe you'll use witchy shortcuts to make life a little easier. Or you may use your inner fire to write an email to a congressperson or attend a protest.

Choosing to live a magical life in a mundane world can mean that we have more opportunities than most to make a difference. Just don't forget that there's magic in self-care as well. Activities like taking a relaxing bath or recharging yourself with meditation go a long way to getting you back out of bed again the very next day.

Further Reading List

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Chapter 9

Working with Other People's Energies

Some people are squeamish about working with others' energies and prefer to keep their energy to themselves. If you're one of those people, you might want to rethink your position. No one is a lone wolf. Everything you do, magic or mundane, affects other people to some degree. For example, choosing to go out to lunch at a café means you'll have a very different experience compared to eating at home or your desk. The glamor you wore to an interview might seem as if it were only for you, but it affected everyone who interviewed you, and if you got the job, everyone else who applied who didn't use glamor. Your magic always affects other people, even if it's just magic for yourself, because magic doesn't exist in a vacuum. Everything truly is connected.

Interactions with other people can be wonderful, or they can raise feelings of the need to protect yourself. Your interactions could even bring about a desire to harm someone with a hex or a curse. All these types of magics reach beyond us to work with another's energies. This section contains information about these aspects as well as some ethics to ponder. My advice is to take this chapter in and think about what your ethics really are. In the end, we should only do the magics we feel comfortable doing.

Ethics of Working with Others' Energies

Where do your ethics lie when it comes to working with someone else's energy? Do you feel that it's okay to perform magic on someone anytime you

feel like it? Consent is an important concept, not only in interpersonal realms, but the magical ones as well. Some witches, particularly Wiccans, follow the three-fold rule. This states that whatever is put out into the world will return threefold, and as such, they believe in "harming none." These concepts are credited to Gerald Gardner, the founder of modern-day Wicca. However, the three-fold rule doesn't satisfy modern understandings of ethics because good intentions may not be interpreted as such by someone else who doesn't consent to your actions.

When I was a very young witch, I decided to heal my boyfriend. It was right after his birthday party, and we were snuggling together on my futon. I had the best intentions—I wanted to heal him so he could release the energetic blocks in his aura. Without asking him if it was okay, I entered a trance state and performed energy work on him, removing the negative energy that was lodged in his aura. After about twenty minutes of this energy work, I came out of my trance state and gazed at him. He had fallen asleep. After a couple of minutes, he woke up, shot out of bed, and started pacing the room while holding his head. He was extremely disoriented. He didn't understand how he'd fallen asleep or why he felt so weird. I tried to calm him down by telling him what I'd done, but he didn't feel any better. I was shocked—I'd thought that healing him would have made him feel amazing. Instead, it seemed as if I'd caused him more trauma than he had before.

After that night, I resolved to never heal someone without their permission again. I also don't pray for people without their permission. Love spells are another area where I don't perform magic on a particular person. Even if you have the best of intentions, working magic on someone without their consent can put you in a difficult ethical position.

With this being said, there are also times when ethical standards have already been broken, and fighting back is the only right thing to do. Many witches feel it's within their purview to perform magic on others no matter what. Have a nasty coworker who is making up rumors about you? What if you could make them nicer by sprinkling sugar in their office? Welcome to the tempting territory of neutral and defensive magics, where your best intentions meet your power to change the world. Ask yourself if you should try to change other people and bend them to your will or simply let them be. The choice is yours. If the thought of messing with someone else's energy makes

you uncomfortable, don't do it. However, if it makes you feel empowered, or as if you can change your life for the better, you might want to give it a try.

When it comes to people who are definitely in the wrong in a big way—those who hurt others, lie, pollute, abuse, and so on—some witches practice baneful magic, or magic performed with direct intentions and goals to harm another. These witches take matters into their own hands and fight back rather than let people get away with it. There are no good intentions here, just power and justice. They believe it's their duty to fight back and practice resistance magic. If we can use magic to make our lives better, and if it makes the world better, why not? After all, cruel people abuse their power every day. Why shouldn't we use our own power to even the scales? Justice doesn't have to be served by a judge and a courtroom. It can be doled out by someone who has no other recourse other than their own magic.

The decision to use baneful magic is a personal one. It's an advanced craft and a decision that shouldn't be taken lightly. There are moments when cursing may be the only right thing to do, especially in moments of great disadvantage or unfairness, and when all other options have failed. At those times, magical defense can be the only way to even the scales. Every intuitive witch must decide on their own if they want to walk the baneful path. And unless we've walked in their shoes and along their paths, it's unfair to judge them for practicing it.

However, we must be careful when our thoughts go in that baneful direction. It can be a slippery slope. Would you curse someone who stole money from you to be homeless? Would you curse their partner too, simply because they live with that person? If not, where do you draw the line?

Before experimenting with neutral, defensive, or baneful magic, you should be a competent witch with at least intermediate skills. It's only when your good magic works that you can be sure you're going to get a predictable result with anything but positive magic. You should also be aware of all possible outcomes before starting any such work. These include a possibility that your work may tie you to them. Some of their energy could "stick" to you. This is particularly ironic if you're trying to remove them from your life. Another problem you may encounter is magical blowback, or unintentionally giving yourself the same magic. That might be okay if it's a sweeten spell, but what if it's a curse? Maintaining your virtue can help reduce this, but it only goes

so far. Another issue you may encounter is a protected target. In this case, it's possible that your magic won't reach them at all. You may also actually harm someone and experience guilt. Can you live with that? As an intuitive witch, it's up to you to follow your intuition about what to do and how deep you go into the neutral, defensive, and baneful territories.

Positive Magic

Generally speaking, most positive magical practitioners follow the three-fold rule and call themselves "light workers." Although this term is antiquated, it describes the kind of person who doesn't want to mess with defensive or baneful magic. This witch chooses to bless when others curse. They always work with the consent of others and never have to worry about whether they're doing the right thing or not. This section provides a few examples of positive magics you can practice; however, if consent is breeched, these magics could just as easily be viewed as neutral or baneful.

Love Magic

Love magic is probably one of the oldest forms of magic in existence. The desire to be with another is nearly universal. As we touched upon earlier, love magic is one of those realms that need to be examined with ethics in mind. Performing magic on a specific person without their consent is just not a good idea for positive magical practitioners. However, it *is* ethical to perform love magic on no specific person but rather a person with a list of qualities you desire in a partner. If your magic on no particular person happens to work on your crush, great! If not, let your eyes be opened to the possibility of a better partner than you could have foreseen. After all, you're a powerful witch who is casting a spell. Why wouldn't your magic work?

First things first—it's important to be extremely clear about your will. Do you want to have a fun, casual relationship, or do you want something more serious? How do you want to feel when you're in the relationship? How will this person feel about you? It's a great idea to write all your ideas down and reread them to be clear on what you're asking for. Just like in the manifestation section in chapter 3, make your will something that's not too restrictive and not too broad. It's good to have specific ideas in mind. Besides your attraction

to the person, the best lists are made of qualities rather than specific hobbies or features.

When I was single and looking for love, I had an intention that I wanted to be in a romantic, loving relationship. I based my love magic on my romantic role models, Gomez and Morticia Addams. Everything they did dripped with intense, deep love, understanding, and respect. Much to my delight, I found a partner who adored me and showered me with affection and a love just like theirs. However, after a while, I realized I should have been more specific. I never dreamed I'd be the Gomez in the relationship! It works for us, though, and to this day, I'm happily married.

Love magic can be performed using simple intuitive magic. You could do candle magic and buy a candle that has a certain color that makes you feel loved. What about a spell jar made with your personal correspondences and your will written on a piece of paper? Or maybe you'd prefer to enchant an amulet to attract the right person and wear it close to your body until you find the perfect mate. You could also wear a magical cloak with the intention of attracting your new beloved to you. Use your intuition about whichever magic would work for you. The personal correspondences you use should make you feel the way you want to feel when you're in love. For me, that's cinnamon, rose, hibiscus, chocolate, and sandalwood, among others, but for you, these may be different.

Self-love magic is one of the best and most transformative magics in the whole world. I highly encourage you delve into those deep realms before attempting love magic for another person. If you ever struggle with self-loathing, give self-love magic a try using any of the simple intuitive magics mentioned earlier, or the self-love mirror magic in chapter 10. Self-love magic is a completely ethical, positive magic that can change your world for the better, possibly for the rest of your life. Loving yourself is often the key to finding a true and lasting love with someone else.

Energy Ladders

When two people trust each other, have few boundaries, and give each other love and support, they can experience what I call an *energy ladder*. This is a magical practice that happens when one person gives energy to the other person,

who accepts it. This energy uplifts the receiving person, who then returns the energy to the first person. Both are uplifted by the experience through each other's support. Higher vibrations of spiritual energy flow freely between them, enabling objectivity and letting realizations come through. The energy ladder can uplift each person one rung, so that each feels slightly elevated. Or an energy ladder can lift both people up several rungs, making them feel as if they've reached a sublime frequency. This is most commonly seen in very good friendships.

Energy ladders are also common in romantic partnerships. Arousal and sex with a generous partner (or partners) cycles sensual energy, letting each person climb the rungs of the ladder. They each give to the other, raising their energy levels higher and higher, into ecstasy.

Energy ladders can also be used in creative performances. A lot of performance artists, including musicians, actors, dancers, and public speakers, use this technique to one degree or another. You've probably noticed how some of the best performers interact with their audience, as if they're riding on the communal energy. They take energy from the crowd, who is freely giving it, use it to empower themselves, interpret the energy according to their own vibration and unique energy, and release it back into the crowd. If you've ever experienced it, you've probably felt a sizzling, uplifting, and intimate energy. The cycle continues, building up energy in the crowd, who feed it to the performer once again.

You don't have to consciously come back down from the highs experienced from energy ladders. Your energy will eventually dissipate or settle into a lower state. Also, although consent isn't always expressed with energy ladders, if someone doesn't want to get drawn into an energy ladder situation, they could refuse the energy offered. The ladder would never reach the next rung up.

Energy ladders can be used when working with the gods and spirits. Sharing energy with them is an ideal way to commune with them. Many times, they return your gift with some of their own energy. Sometimes, I receive so much from them that it makes me swoon with bliss. Those kinds of experiences with the gods and spirits can turn a blind belief into direct experience, personal gnosis, a relationship, and possibly even wisdom.

Relationships with Animals

One of my cats knows when I'm sick or feeling low energy. She cuddles up next to me, purring loudly, and gazes up at me with her wise green eyes. She always makes me feel better. My other cat likes to be near me whenever I write. If I feel stuck, we interact for a minute, and then I feel more inspired to keep working. My cats and I exchange energy often, but in those times, I feel as if they're trying to give me extra energy. Animals are wise beyond our comprehension and are probably more aware of energetic exchanges than we are. The next time you're feeling low and your pet approaches you with lots of energy, try accepting a little energy from them. Thank them and return the energy to them in an energy ladder with pettings, play, touch, and their favorite food. I don't recommend taking too much energy from them or doing it very often. Even though I believe animals have the ability cut us off before we take too much energy from them, we still shouldn't abuse the relationship.

The Healing Arts

Healing is a necessary part of being alive. We all get scratched up and broken from time to time, whether on the physical plane or emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. It's important to know how to self-soothe, practice self-care, and heal ourselves. However, there will be times when we simply can't heal ourselves, and another's assistance would help us greatly. Healing interactions are very intimate. An ethical healer will always seek consent to work on those they heal. If, for some reason, they can't get an answer—for example, if someone is in a coma—they could offer healing energy as a gift that the person's higher self can either accept or refuse.

An intuitive healer can sense the needs of the person, and can blend their healing specialties to give them what they need. They can also sense whether they actually should heal the person or decline. The healer might choose to help heal one wounded area and not another, due to the severity of the wound or their own abilities and limitations. They may also prefer to show the wounded person how to heal themselves through meditation and energy work. As the saying goes, give a person a fish, and they'll eat for a day. Teach a person how to fish, and they'll eat until their last days.

Intuitive healers are usually certified in several kinds of healing, including reiki, massage, sonic immersion, naturopathy, hypnosis, healing with essential oils, intuitive energetic healing, and many others. If you're interested in learning more about the healing arts, research the types and methods and choose one that's best suited for your temperament.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

Intuitive Healing

Shringara Hasya

In my healing practice, I rely greatly on intuitive forces to guide the process. There are many ways our intuitive senses can present. We all have clairsensitivities, or intuitive senses, also known as *clairs*. These include claircognizance (intuitive knowing), clairvoyance (intuitive vision), clairaudience (intuitive hearing), clairsentience (intuitive feeling or empathy), clairsalience (intuitive smell), clairgustance (intuitive taste), and clairtangency (intuitive knowing by touching an object or person). These clairs show up for each individual in unique ways, and one may find that some of their clairs are stronger than others.

During a session with a client, my strongest clairs assist me by giving me a very clear knowledge about the person and the issues being presented that I could not otherwise know. I often receive visions, symbolic in nature, that have great meaning to my clients. More concrete pictures of present and or past events, people, places, and more will reveal important information to me about the person I am working with. Visions of helpful spirits, ancestors, and departed loved ones show up in a consultation or healing session to offer a message, or to give guidance about the best ways I can assist my client in their healing process. As an empath, I can generally sense what is happening emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually with others without them having to communicate it in words. Messages come to me in the dreamtime, during meditation, and in trance states, or sometimes unexpectedly drop clues, reminders, and advice for myself or another.

We all have these clairs to varying degrees, and we often use them without being aware. A gut feeling, a knowing that a particular person is about to text or call, an apprehension about someone or something, and a dream of a long-lost friend who reaches out to you out of the blue are all examples. I invite you to tune in

and ask yourself which clairs are strongest for you. Play with turning them up or down, like a volume dial. There are times when it will be necessary, for your own protection, to tone down these clairs. They are quite useful to us, not only in our spiritual, healing, and ceremonial practices, but in our daily lives too.

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Defensive and Neutral Magics

Not everyone will have our best interests at heart. Energy vampires and people with selfish motives love nothing more than to siphon our energies and take advantage of people who let them. When we encounter those kinds of people, we have the ability to use our powers to protect ourselves and our loved ones from harm. Learning the art of defensive magic ensures we're not vulnerable to their attacks.

Whenever possible, use your words to change the situation, as mentioned previously in this chapter. It's often the best primary offense. For example, if you'd like someone to leave you alone, tell them you're not interested in being friends or that you can't talk. This direct form of communication usually does the trick. However, there may be times when communicating directly doesn't feel appropriate or safe. When there's a power dynamic in their favor or a threat of violence, a simple request could escalate an already negative situation.

This is where magic can help. For millennia, people have turned to magic to help them find their strength and to change their realities. *Defensive magic* exists because many people were disempowered due to a restrictive society and their circumstances. This section contains some of the best defensive magical arts and the ways to practice them. They're also called *neutral magics*, because they can go either way depending on your intentions and actions.

Sweeten Spells

If you want to improve a relationship, sweeten spells can work wonders. It's a magical way to transform a sour relationship into something nicer. These often take the form of a spell jar. Use a sweet substance like honey, molasses, or sugar while thinking about the other person. Include items such as a photo of them, their name, or something representing their general energy with an intuitively chosen sweet substance in a ritual.

Poppet Magic

A poppet is a doll that represents a person. It's a prehistoric kind of magic that goes back to ancient Egypt and Greece, and possibly even earlier. Poppets are similar to spell jars because you can create them from materials you have on hand, including sticks, toothpicks, wire, fabric, yarn, thread, herbs, grass, and other personal ingredients, such as hair or fingernails. If you're missing personal ingredients of the person you want to represent, use the resemblance of the person. Fashion these items into a doll or a poppet and use your intuition about what to do next. They can be used for a multitude of purposes, including romance, protection, banishing, hexing, cursing, and healing. Use your intuition to make the doll do what you wish the person to do. Poppet magic can be beneficial, or it can be used in baneful magic with a curse or hex.

I grew up with "worry dolls" and learned to use them to release my fears and feel more protected. Poppet magic might have even assisted with my first official relationship in junior high. Every day after school, I moved a knight figurine that represented a boy I liked closer and closer to a statuette of a woman resembling me. On the day our hands touched, I asked him if he'd be my boyfriend, and he said yes. Although our relationship never took off because we were young and shy, the results of poppet magic were thrilling.

Freezer Spell

Want to stop someone in their tracks? Need someone to grow colder? Gather some correspondences that represent your target, write their name down, speak your intentions out loud as you combine them in a bag, and put it in the freezer. An alternative is to pour the correspondences into a container that won't shatter, add water, recite the spell again with more energy, and freeze it into a block of ice. Leave it in the freezer for as long as you want this person or action to be frozen.

Snatch Your Energy Back

Some people are energy vampires. There's no other way to say it. Consciously or unconsciously, these people take energy from their interactions with other people. Even the best of defenses can be vulnerable to a skilled attacker. Luckily, you can take your energy back.

The first time I tried to take my energy back was when someone literally would not let me leave a bank. At first, the woman who was chatting me up about the scarf I had knitted seemed nice. But I noticed she had high emotional and spiritual energy levels, which was inappropriate for the place. I made polite conversation, then tried to leave. She persisted on asking more questions and continuing the conversation, touching my scarf and turning it over without asking if she could touch my clothing. I felt myself grow weak and felt a chunk of my energy leave me. Because I paid attention to my energy, I was conscious of what was happening and became outraged, even in my low energy state. With my mind's eye, I "saw" my arm reach out toward her, and then I grabbed a handful of her energy and yanked it back into my aura. I instantly felt better—it was as refreshing as taking a nap and drinking a shot of espresso. Just as suddenly, the woman said goodbye and left.

I'm not sure if this woman was an energy vampire on purpose. It's possible she was unaware, or maybe she just wanted to trade energy with me. Her method was nonconsensual, though, so I consider her to be in the wrong. Remember, it's always up to you to decide if you want to exchange energy with someone and if you let someone touch you and your clothes, jewelry, or hair. If someone takes energy from you, it's up to you to decide whether you want to take back what's yours.

The next time someone takes energy from you, imagine reaching out and taking a hunk of energy from them. Try to only take as much energy as what was taken from you. Once you have it in your energetic field, shift the vibration so it buzzes at your frequency and doesn't carry any of the other person's resonance.

Cut Cords

When we cut energetic cords with someone, we disconnect ourselves from their energy. It's like hanging up on a phone call—you're not listening to their energy any longer. You can cut cords with the intention that the disconnection will only last for a short while, such as with your close friends when you want to practice feeling closed off for a meditation. Or you could desire to cut someone off forever.

Cutting cords is very simple, but there are several different methods to do it, and everyone seems to have their favorite. You could simply imagine the

cords between you and anyone else snapping and traveling away. You could also imagine a knife cutting the cords. This is fun, because you can experiment with different imaginary knives—will you use a switchblade, a butcher's knife, or a katana? Different energies may call for different knives. One of my friends uses her fingers as scissors to physically and energetically cut the cords. More often than not, I use my hand to chop the cords, pretending that the edge of my palm is a super sharp blade.

As you cut, keep a neutral or positive emotion about you. Angry cuttings tend to make the energy cord come back in a sneaky way. Beware of cords that have a tendency to reform as soon as you cut them. If this happens, imagine tying the cords to the earth, or give the severed cord to a god, spirit guide, or ancestral spirit, and ask them to assist.

Cutting negative cords corrects energetic imbalances and recharges your soul batteries. It also is a great way to really end connections to relationships so you can move on with your life.

Bind

Binding is a defensive magic used to stop someone from doing harm or to prevent them from taking action. It can also be used to stop someone from talking. It's a form of defensive magic that can help you by restricting the activities of others.

To bind someone, cast a circle in order to contain all the energy you'll be raising. Get into the mindset—list all the person's atrocities and dump your anger into the circle. Build the energy higher. When the energy reaches a peak, speak aloud how you want them bound as you wind string, thread, or cloth around something representing the target. Use the first and last name of the person. For example, "I bind Felice Gregor from doing harm," or "I bind Raphael Moss from talking about me." Any variation can be used to reinforce the spell.

A binding can occur on a spectrum of intentions and goals, but it basically assists in preventing action. It isn't necessarily a baneful magic unless it's extremely restrictive, such as preventing someone from using their body. In those cases, it's more of a hex. Any phase of the moon will do for bindings, but some prefer to use the waning crescent.

RITUAL

CUT NEGATIVE CORDS AND CALL BACK ENERGY

Use a cleansing agent such as sage or other burnable herbs to cleanse yourself and your ritual area. Set the following items near your ritual space or altar: a candle (any color that raises your energetic vibration), a lighter, a grounding stone such as hematite or pyrite, an athame (optional), and a journal and a pen.

Center and align. Cast a circle with your usual spirits or deities. When you're between the worlds, light the candle. Say or think, "I light this candle for myself—my whole self. May its fire cleanse away any impurities from me and this circle." Hold the grounding stone in your palm and close your eyes. Mentally scan your body, acknowledging and releasing any tight energy and any thoughts that come up. You probably have an idea of the person whose energy you'd like to no longer be connected to. If not, just observe what comes up as you do this practice.

With your mind's eye, envision where those cords are that connect your body to this other person or this negative energy. Start at your head, go down your shoulders and chest, down your arms, down your belly and back, your torso, rear, and down your legs, all the way to your toes. Take a moment to feel your energy and your body. On a scale of zero to ten (zero being exhausted and ten being overflowing with joy and love), what number are you? Breathe a few deep and strong breaths. These should be audible and forceful but not fast enough that you are light-headed. Increase your energy at least two numbers higher. Shout or think, "I call back my energy! I call back my power! I cleanse myself of other's expectations. I cut the cords that bind me to _____."

Hold your athame or imagine you're holding a knife. Mentally or physically, cut any negative energetic cords that connect you to other people. Keep your energy neutral. With each broken cord, imagine that you're tying it to someplace deep in the earth, or give the severed cord to a deity or spirit to take care of it. If the cords reform to you again, ask for assistance from your deity or spirit to sever them and cut again with greater attention to energy. If it helps to repeat the phrase above, do so.

(Optional: If you want to take your energy back from the other person, imagine the energy coming back into you, or imagine snatching it with your hands and placing it back into your energetic field. Only take as much energy as what was taken from you. Once you've secured the energy, hold it in your body and energetic field, changing it so it resonates at your frequency. Breathe strongly again. Hold the energy intact and close to you for as long as you can. Integrate it into your body, balance your chakras, and feel it uplift you.)

Once you've cut all the negative cords, think about how every interaction involves energy. What have you been letting into your energetic field? Who were you allowing to steal energy from you? Journal about how this makes you feel. Make a pact with yourself that moving forward, you will remove yourself from those people and situations as much as possible. You will engage with them at your discretion only.

When you are done journaling, say or think, "I am in charge of my energetic interactions. I control my interactions and energy." Breathe deeply again and begin to heal yourself. Place your hands on your heart, temples, or anywhere else your intuition guides you. Give yourself all the love and attention you've given to others. Feel your energy start to expand and further relax your body. This expansive, easy feeling is the one you should be looking for in life. It's the clue that you're on the right path. Make a list of people who make you feel bigger, better, more inspired. Commit to seeing them more often.

Over the next few days, be extremely aware of your energy, and snip any energetic cords that reform. Be conscious of when you feel low energy and what interactions you had leading up to that. Move toward expansive feelings whenever possible.

Baneful Magic

Baneful magic, or magic intending to harm another, can be split into two categories. Curses are defined as any serious attempt to magically harm someone physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. Hexes are gentler—they don't actually cause as much harm, and they don't last as long. They could be seen as vexing incidents, trifling annoyances, or as pranks.

Most witches agree that we shouldn't practice petty magic (hexing without a cause) or doling out a greater punishment than fits the crime. Those practices get beyond what's fair and puts you into a malicious territory. Being overtly cruel isn't a good thing in mundane life or a witchy life. This kind of magic could get you into trouble with some of your spirit guides or your gods. They may decide they don't want to take part in that kind of magic, and they could leave you alone. You could also attract malicious spirits, which can be hard to shake due to their sticky energy.

If you're okay with the uncertainties of baneful magic and feel positive about being a wielder of the power of justice, proceed with caution. Start with small experiments. Note what works and what doesn't work in your book of shadows. Try working with vengeful deities and spirits. If, at the end of a baneful magic ritual, you feel any kind of negative energy or entities still nearby, banish them. Before performing any additional baneful magic, reevaluate your rituals and the results, and tweak them to refine your approach.

Negative Self-Talk

Before discussing the practice of baneful magic on others, let's talk about the giant cauldron in the room—many of us unintentionally practice baneful magic on ourselves. When we engage in negative self-talk, we curse and hex ourselves. Saying something like "I'm so stupid" changes our energetic expression and causes us to believe it's true. We'll act in that stupid manner, blocking higher energies and opportunities. We'll experience the world from a more limited view. We'll get burned when we walk across hot coals because our belief in ourselves is low. Negative self-talk can also attract malicious beings who feed on that kind of energy and can encourage more of that kind of behavior. Always be aware of your intentions and the power of your words. Cut negative self-talk and replace it with positive or neutral words. Even saying something like "I'm doing my best" is far better than "I'm so stupid."

No Joking Around

As witches, our words are so powerful that they can cause things to happen, even if we're just joking. The best example I can think of is the first time I cursed someone, which was an accident. My high school boyfriend was having problems with his basketball rival, who kept scoring on him. He asked

me to break his rival's leg with my "magic." I laughed but said sure and didn't think of it again. The next day, as they were playing basketball, the rival fell, and wouldn't you know it—he broke his leg. I was racked with guilt. I hadn't actually intended to harm him. I hadn't even done anything beyond jokingly accept. However, my acceptance of the baneful request enabled the curse to happen. To me, this illustrates how much magic wants to work with us and is just waiting for us to say the words.

Curses and Hexes

To curse or hex, cast a circle of protection to confine the energy. Pour your emotions and energy into the circle and state the target's name and crimes. Once a sufficient amount of energy is raised, there are several things that could be done. You could call upon your gods or spirits and ask them to harm the person in some way. Be specific so that the gods or spirits don't get carried away. You could request that person to be harmed mentally, emotionally, physically, or spiritually. You could even make a caveat and say, "Harm them as much as they harmed others, and no more," in an attempt to even the scales and not let them tip beyond what's fair.

Other things you could do include calling out the name of the person and directing negative energy toward them. You could gather materials that represent them, such as an item of clothing belonging to them, a poppet, or an image, and harm the materials with a magical action. These actions could include tearing, burning, stomping on, punching, slapping, stabbing (not with your athame—keep that for neutral or positive work only), drowning, freezing, dismembering, or anything else you deem appropriate. Use your intuition to find a way to hurt them in the most effective manner. Whatever creates a reversal in the power dynamic is the energy you want. When you speak your curse, tell them why you're angry. For example, "I curse you, Keno Xercea, for abusing my friend. I curse you to a lifetime of impotency! May you never experience arousal ever again!" Truth be told, this is one of my favorite curses, but it shouldn't be doled out willy-nilly.

You could also raise malicious spirits against them to do your work. This is a practice for an expert-level baneful magic witch only, who is proficient in working with them. Only spirits that can be controlled should be summoned, and their objectives should be clear. Failing to follow that advice can

make them cause more harm than you wish and can also permit them to hang around you and create chaos in your life. Use caution with baneful spirits, and as we discussed in chapter 6, only summon what you can banish.

Consider using an expiration date on your magic. Maybe your hex will only last a day. Maybe it will last a season or a year. Or perhaps the curse will only stop working when the target does something good, such as apologize or return the money they stole. Build the energy with your emotion—put all your anger, frustration, sorrow, hatred, and more in the circle. Dump your negative thoughts and negative energy in. When the energy peaks, release it up and into the world with one last directive and send it to your target.

When the energy has been sent, give thanks and open your circle. Burn incense, resins, or herbs to cleanse the area. A salt bath might also be a good idea to cleanse your aura. Follow appropriate post-ritual care, including grounding with food and rest.

If you ever wish to call off a hex, you'll need to recreate the same initial circle, with the same spirits and gods. Instead of stirring up your anger, call the curse back from the target and into an inanimate object, such as a piece of wood: "I call back my curse from Hester Yates. She has apologized and has learned her lesson. I call off my curse for her poor health. May the curse flow away from her and into this object." Repeat this several times until enough energy is raised. When you've funneled the energy into the object, open the circle and burn the object, thus transforming it. Cleanse the ritual area and yourself twice.

There are several other books that have much more information on the complicated workings of baneful magic. If you choose to venture into this part of the forest, I advise reading them for other perspectives and methods. See the further reading list on the next page.

Witch It Your Way

The world is both magical and mundane, and you're connected to it. Are you a positive witch only, or a practitioner of all kinds of magic? It's up to you to intuitively decide in what manner you'll interact with the mundane world, energetically speaking. The biggest challenge may be to remain spiritual in the face of popular reality and its interactions. It'd be easy to sleepwalk through

life, but that's not your path. You've been charged to be aware of energy and to step up to the challenge to live a magical life in your own, wonderful way.

Further Reading List

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Chapter 10

Advanced Magic and Energy Work

When we lead well-balanced lives and practice deeply energetic magic, we can easily access higher frequencies. Our magics start to become much more effective and give us more moving experiences. We realize we have the power to create these higher energy experiences as often as we can sustain them, and so we create them more often. It's like a gateway opens up to us, with more possibilities than we had before at those lower levels. It just takes time, energy, awareness, knowledge, and practice.

This chapter is all about owning the magnitude of your power, elevating your practice, and working with higher energies. We'll delve into the different trance states, powerful techniques to raise energy, and also share a few tips and tricks for advanced magical work. The methods in this chapter can be used in accordance with your intuition. As with all intense magical work, be sure to ground and recharge your physical body afterward.

Trance States

The key to advanced rituals, magic, and otherworldly wisdom is the cultivation of a good trance state. Trance states happen when we control our physical, emotional, and mental energy, and raise our frequency of spiritual energy. Raising spiritual energy through trance states is different from the other methods of raising spiritual energy presented in this book. You could think of trance states as refined attunements of the body, mind, energetic field, and spirit. For most people, they are harder to achieve and maintain for a prolonged period of time. This makes them a more advanced art. Additionally, some of the trance

states are more meditative than the other practices presented thus far, which makes them better for introspective journeys and solitary practitioners.

There are several levels of consciousness (or brainwaves), each with their own frequencies.

- ★ Beta waves are the regular, everyday brainwaves we experience in waking life and in our rational mindsets. This is not one of the trance brainwaves, but rather, the frequency that rules medium energy activities and basic daily functions. The guardian, or ego, monitors and regulates these waves. They support good mental energy.
- ★ Gamma brainwaves have a higher frequency than beta waves and are indicative of a trance state and higher spiritual and mental energies. Gamma waves occur when we have spiritual moments, ecstatic trance, union with the gods, a revelation, living in the flow, and kundalini rising. These can be experienced when dancing, in a ritual, or while meditating. When we feel these waves, we feel a greater connection with the divine. We also experience inspirations and deep insights about our lives.
- ★ Alpha brainwaves are slower than beta waves. We experience these gentle trance brainwaves in deep relaxation, such as a light meditative state, a light trance, or a daydream. Alpha waves may be where imagination and intuition are found. When the mental guardian is absent, alpha waves arise naturally. The slower frequencies in alpha waves (and theta waves) can facilitate a higher spiritual energy to come through.
- ★ Theta waves are even slower, and they arise during times of deep meditation, deep trance, and light sleep. This is the state where we can experience dreams and rapid eye motion. The theta state is nonverbal. It communicates in feelings and visual or symbolic representations. The subconscious is awake in this state, as well as our subconscious programming. This state may make you feel as if you're spinning or rotating, even if you're remaining still. It may be due to being in touch with our energetic selves, or perhaps it's due to the chakra wheels getting energized.
- ★ Delta waves are the slowest brainwaves. They occur in deep, dreamless sleep, and occasionally in our deepest meditations as well. These waves are present as our unconscious mind, our repressed memories, our shadows, and that which we cannot see.

Our brains are amazing—they can even sustain multiple wavelengths at the same time. This explains how we can have different energetic frequencies and states at once. For instance, we can have high emotional and spiritual energetic frequencies, and also have low physical and mental energy. This makes our energy complex, sort of like a three-dimensional puzzle.

With practice, you can use your knowledge about the different brainwaves to put yourself into the right trance state for your personal intuitive witchcraft. People who practice magic often, or those who meditate, will be able to bring about gamma, alpha, and theta wave trance states easily and maintain them. If you're not adept at it yet, keep trying. The more it's practiced, the easier it becomes to travel that neural pathway in the brain, and the further you get each time. Record your insights from your trance work in your book of shadows before your altered state vanishes.

MEDITATION

ALPHA AND THETA BRAINWAVE TRANCE STATES

Get in a comfortable position and take a deep breath. Feel your mental energy start to slow down—way down. Take yourself from beta waves to slower alpha waves. Continue to breathe deeply until you reach a relaxed state. Feel this state out, exploring how active you feel in your body, emotions, mind, and spirit. If any thoughts arise, let them slide by. If you can pinpoint a certain frequency that feels like the alpha state, ride those waves. Maintain the state for a couple of minutes without falling asleep.

When you are ready, take a deep breath and consciously downshift your brainwaves into an even slower frequency, into the theta waves. Let a deeper trance come over you. It may feel as if you are sinking deeper into your mind or body or that you're disassociating from your body. Reality may seem a little more distant, yet, at the same time, you should feel a stronger connection with your spiritual energy. If you feel a spinning or rotating sensation, let it happen. Play with taking deeper or shallower breaths, and feel how that affects the spinning sensation. Enjoy this feeling, and maintain the trance state without falling asleep for a couple of minutes.

When you're ready, rise up out of the trance states by taking deep, strong breaths. Feel your brainwaves increase in frequency until you're experiencing the normal beta waves again. Center yourself and ground by having a snack or feeling the energy of the earth. Record your experiences in your book of shadows.

The theta wave trance state is the foundation for most of the work in this chapter. Practice entering this trance state regularly. With time, you'll be able to maintain the state while simultaneously using your mental energy to focus on meditative or magical objectives.

Energy Raising Drills

Artists practice their skills in order to master them and become proficient, and you should too. Without practice, none of us would progress beyond our beginner stages. We certainly wouldn't master anything. Repeating something until it feels natural makes us more competent practitioners. Every repetition makes the act feel more effortless, until we're casting a solid circle every time, nailing the invocation, and truly bringing the higher energy inside of ourselves. The art of changing one's energy on a whim is a valuable witch skill. These exercises will help you train your mindfulness abilities.

EXERCISE

DRILL TO RAISE ENERGY

Sit down in a quiet, safe place and get comfortable. Feel your energy: complete the energy grid, if you desire. Think about what your energy feels like on a scale of one to ten, with one being the lowest possible before sleep and 10 being exuberantly happy. Feel the energy of whatever number you're at. Feel the vibrations within you. If you're not there already, try to feel what a nine or a ten would feel like. Pick up the vibration of energy—feel it lighten your body and mind. Use your breath, posture, muscles, and thoughts to align yourself to that number. Feel your vibration change on all energetic levels. Make it feel brighter and happier. Hold it for a full minute, counting to sixty. Close your eyes if that helps maintain it. After the minute has passed, release the excess energy and come back to whatever level is natural for you at this time. Take a few deep breaths to clear it out. Does the world look different to

you now? If so, notice how and what. If you used the energy grid previously, complete it again and see where your energy is different.

If you feel okay to keep going with this exercise, take a deep breath. You're going to lift your energy up to a ten—or if you achieved that last time, take it to a twelve. Realign, shifting whatever needs to move energetically. Breathe deep and let your breath help you soar above what you thought was possible. Float in the ethers, feeling the effortlessness and magic. Connect to the divine through your crown chakra. Let it pour crystalline light into you. Hold this higher state for thirty seconds, counting to thirty and closing your eyes if that helps. Maintain the energy. When you're ready, come back down to nine, then let yourself fall back to a natural energy level. Notice what's different after this exercise. Complete the energy grid again and see where you've changed.

This lesson is intended to teach you that the scales of what we believe is possible can be transcended. Repeat this energy-raising exercise and work on maintaining the higher energy frequencies for longer periods of time. You can also train yourself to drop to a lower frequency if so desired.

EXERCISE
CLOSED AND OPEN ENERGY

This drill is about opening and closing your energetic valves, so to speak. It should be performed when you're feeling a stable, medium-level energy.

Sit down in a quiet, safe place and get comfortable. To close yourself off, take a deep breath and consciously shut down your energy awareness about everyone and everything around you. This includes disconnecting from partners, pets, friends, and people across the world —everyone. If it helps, imagine cords being cut, don a protective energetic cloak, see your valves closing, or pretend that you're in a sensory deprivation tank. Use whatever imagery works for you. Physically, this should feel as if you're in your body and feeling only your senses. Your physical senses should stop where your body stops, as if you're encased in a shell and can't touch anything outside of your own body. Emotionally, you should only feel your own emotions. Mentally, you should only

be thinking about yourself or, better yet, have no thoughts at all. Once you're truly experiencing only your own energy, maintain it for a minute or so. If you think of anyone else, take the metaphorical wheel and steer yourself back to your own body and thoughts. Meditate in this closed-off state.

Come back to the world by envisioning that you're reconnecting only with your favorite people. Try to attain being in a state of somewhere in-between closed and open. Keep your energy at a state of neutrality, letting in what's good and keeping out any bad energy. Hold this partially closed and partially open state for a minute or two. Don't connect with anyone who isn't one of your favorite people.

Next, we'll practice connecting with everything. Release all closed-off protections. Feel open to receiving energy from all of your friends and the world around you, with no boundaries. Feel it all! Imagine energetic cords running from you to your loved ones, your energetic valves open and flowing out from you and into you, or imagine being hugged. Physically, you might feel "out of your body" somewhat. Emotionally, you may sense others' feelings or desires. You may feel things about them as well. Mentally, you may be drawn to think about other people and what their lives are like. You feel so open to the flow and connection of life. Maintain this openness for at least a minute, meditating on the different waves of energy that arise, if you wish. When you are done, return to a neutral half-open, half-closed state.

The next time you're in a social environment and you feel the desire to shut down, try the half-closed state or the closed-off mode. Likewise, when you want to feel open, use the opening method. It may be helpful to practice the exercise that is the most opposite to you. For example, as an empath, I need to practice closing off more so I can be in touch with my own thoughts and feelings. Someone who is naturally closed off should practice being more open.

By performing these energy shifts, you can get used to changes in your environments and can respond with greater integrity. These will also help you to not feel obligated to participate in energetic interactions that don't inspire you.

EXERCISE

STAYING AT MEDIUM ENERGY

The next time you need to go to work, the grocery, or some other medium-energy place, channel medium energy only. Ride the wave of normalcy. Work to maintain this calm, productive energy. If anything other than medium energy comes up, either self-soothe or relax into medium energy again. Tell yourself you'll spend time on that emotion once you're out of that place.

Does this help you accomplish your intentions and goals? Does it help you focus on the task at hand? For some people, this will be an easy task. Others will need to work on this.

Being Aware

The goal of these exercises is to access and maintain these various states of energy to keep ourselves on our toes. When we practice shifting our internal gears in private, we can eventually do so in public and among other people much easier. This practice also allows us to explore these energetic changes without tiring ourselves too much in an unfamiliar environment. With time, you'll be able to access the energy you need when you need it. You'll be a stronger witch, more able to open up to spiritual energy for a ritual or move through a crowded area without feeling an energy crash.

Circle-Casting Drills

I can always tell how successful my rituals will be by how strong the circle is. Casting a circle is integral to the success of the ritual. It's time to reevaluate your current methods. Are you happy with the tone of your circles? Do there seem to be vacuous spots? Consider how much energy you're putting into your circles, and how much more energy you could use to create stronger ones. This exercise helps us flex and strengthen the energetic muscles inside and outside of ourselves.

EXERCISE

CASTING CIRCLES

Center yourself and raise energy to create a state of high spiritual energy. Cast a circle, using all your imagery and energy. Push the energy

out of you, feeling it take the shape of a solid circle. Maintain the energy of the circle for a full minute, not letting it quiver. When the circle starts to dissipate, consciously open the circle. Take a break and let the energy clear for a few minutes. Cleanse the space if needed, or ground with some food.

After a couple of minutes, cast another circle, working with even more energy than before. Use everything you have. Hold the energy of the circle for a longer period of time. Release it before it falls.

If you wish, you can cast another, even stronger circle. Stop this exercise before you're completely exhausted. Rest and replenish your energy with food and drink.

Try this exercise again soon. Repeat it until the actions of casting feel natural and the circle feels solid. After a while, you may feel as if something "clicks" within you. When that happens, you'll have a greater awareness of the circle or a feeling of completion after you cast. Don't be surprised if you get better at this technique after you've slept. Sleep has a way of letting us master things, as if we're practicing in our dreams.

Higher Energy Frequencies for Practices and Rituals

The ability to raise energy is one of the defining characteristics of an advanced practitioner. A good witch can stir up magic, raise the hair on people's arms, and summon the presence of the gods. This list of techniques to raise higher energy during practice and rituals doesn't guarantee goosebumps, but it does provide some insight and options. They may influence the intensity of magic to one degree or another. Before performing any of these actions, be sure you have cleansed both physically and mentally, are aligned, and are ready for spiritual work.

Raising the Otherworldly Winds

One of my favorite ways to raise energy is a practice I call "raising the otherworldly winds." It's one of the best ways to get in touch with spiritual energy, and it balances the chakras while simultaneously grounding and elevating your energy. It can cleanse you energetically before ritual, can raise energy during a ritual, and can also act as a beacon to attract whatever you're manifesting.

Start with your arms at your sides. Empty your lungs. Focus on the underworld below you—the world beneath the world. Flex your hands into fists and pull that energy up, from deep within the earth, as you start to inhale. Let your arms rise out to your sides, keeping them long, as if you were going to draw a circle around you. Feel the energy raise through your body and reach your heart when your arms are at a T. Continue to raise your arms higher. As your shoulder muscles start to flex, tilt your head back and face the sky. As your breath peaks, lift your arms directly overhead. Hold your breath in while connecting with the upperworld, or a star, or a deity. Exhale, releasing the energy out into the world as your arms slowly trace the circle back down.

If you aren't able to perform this physically, imagine doing it in your mind. Ideally, this will take one long breath in and out, but at first, it may take several. Follow the energy, doing whatever helps you to feel it moving up, through, and out of your body. Make your connections to the underworld and the upperworld strong.

This exercise came to me spontaneously. The first time I ever did it, I was walking by myself in a wintery forest, not a soul in sight. At the peak of my breath, I connected with the presence of Artemis, virgin huntress goddess of the woods. I felt her energy course through my body. As I released the energy to the world, I stopped short. A pack of deer ran down the path, straight toward me. I froze, watching them in awe. When they were few feet in front of me, they leapt off the main path and into the woods, following their own trails. This practice helped me raise my own energy and also connect with Artemis. She gave me the experience of her wild energy through the deer.

Whenever I raise the otherworldly winds, I usually experience an energetic buzz that lasts awhile. It's always a good way to raise energy.

Combine Magics

A simple way to increase the energy of your magic is to do two or three magical acts instead of just one. When magical practices are mixed together, it raises energy on an exponential level.

There are two ways to combine magics. The first way to combine magics is sequential, or one after another. This is gentle and has a certain flow to it. It builds the energy higher, step by step. Examples of sequential magics could be taking a magical bath and then performing candle magic; or yoga followed

by meditation or shamanic journeying; or a home blessing and creation of a home protection ward.

The second method of combined magics is simultaneous, or practices that happen at the same time. Simultaneous magics are intense ways to rapidly lift you into an elevated state or maintain that state. Examples of this could include trance and some form of divination, such as automatic writing; ecstatic dancing while drawing sigils in the air; or chanting and meditating while visualizing a colorful auric charge.

To incorporate layered magics into your intuitive rituals, consider your needs. Feel the energy intended and combine magics using your intuition. For example, if you wish to feel more at peace and relaxed, use sequential magics that calm, such as a salt bath and a spell jar for more serenity. When we layer magics together, we concentrate them and imbue deeper meaning.

At the end of a combined magic ritual, post-ritual care is especially important, as the potential for exhausting oneself increases drastically. Ground and center yourself. Be sure to hydrate and eat good food to replenish what you spent. Maybe you'll even eat two courses.

Use Charged Tools and Materials

You can use any old tools or materials for your ritual, but your magic is likely to be stronger if you used charged water, charged crystals, a candle dedicated to the magic you wish to perform, an altar that has been storing energy for a long time, and tools that have been charged with your intentions. With the deeper meaning inherent in all those items, you can create with a greater bank of energy, which lets you raise energy more effortlessly. Likewise, you can enchant a charm or an amulet for the specific purpose of being a clear channel or raising magical energy in ritual. Every time you use it, you'd draw on the original intention and wield greater power. This concept was covered in chapter 4 and would only need to be adjusted for your purposes.

More Advanced Breath Work

Additional breath work can be performed to get your mind into a higher state. Pay attention to the connection between the flow of your breath and your energy state. Experiment with slower, more even, and faster breathing. What do each of these do to you?

Yogis have several breathing techniques that create higher mental states. These include the skull shining breath, rhythmic breath, and, my favorite, the alternate nostril breath. To try this breathing exercise, close off the right nostril and breathe out of your left nostril until your lungs are empty. Inhale through the left until your lungs are full, then close the left nostril and exhale through the right completely. Inhale a full breath through the right nostril, then close off the right nostril and start over. It sounds extraordinarily easy and simplistic, but this breathing technique can elevate your energetic state by several levels.

If you're interested in learning more about yogic breathing exercises, look for books or videos to get information close to the source, to see the process, and learn more of the cultural origins.

Sex and Sensuality

Arousal is an intensely magical state. Stimulation usually indicates a higher physical, emotional, and mental energetic state. Sometimes, it can even create a higher spiritual state. When arousal manifests into sexual activity, our energies can be raised to an even higher degree.

Whether you use sensuality magic (or sex magic) with a partner, multiple partners, or by yourself, it can be an incredibly deep and rewarding experience. It can be utilized as a preparation and cleanser before ritual, to purify you of any energies you wish to release, to align yourself, as a magical practice in and of itself, or as part of a ritual.

To participate in this juicy way to raise energy with others, first be clear about consent. Talking about consent is sexy and respectful. What do you wish to do? What are your boundaries or limitations? What are their boundaries or limitations? Always communicate those out loud with any new partners and existing partners unless you have a clear understanding. Always express consent before intoxication and again before any sexual acts. You also have the right to stop whatever is happening at any time by saying so. Consent is the foundation for any sex magic. Don't skip this step.

Next, consider your intentions and goals. Do you wish to share energy, grow feelings of love, bind yourself closer to your partner(s), send energy toward a goal, heal yourself, or use the energy for any other purpose? You don't have to cast a circle for sex magic—the radius of influence is the body or bodies at play.

They can contain and release the raised energies well enough without needing a circle.

Like magical practices and rituals, sexual activities have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Be conscious of the energy at the beginning or the introduction of sexual energy (foreplay). Revel in the buildup and energy raising in the middle parts. See if you can use all of the energies available to elevate you to a higher state. Rejoice in the climax or release of energy. Use the power of your orgasm(s) or climax to send energy toward whatever intentions or goals you set. Afterward, bask in the glow, meditating, sharing energy, or communing with your loved one(s).

A Little Pain

Pleasure isn't the only way to shift your energetic vibration to shift to a higher level. Mildly painful sensations can also be used. These can include stimuli such as pressing your fingernails into your palms or briefly touching a flame. A little bit of pain wakes up primal parts of ourselves and makes us more alert. Even thinking about pain can cause your energy to spike. However, this path should be taken very seriously. I do not recommend causing actual harm to yourself in the form of burns, bruises, punctures, cuts, or any other self-inflicted injury. Always err on the side of caution when using nonpleasurable stimuli.

Think Like Your Gods

Add deity-specific practices to enhance your connection to them and their energy. If you know that Dionysus loves dancing, *dance*. If you worship Hekate, make an offering at a liminal place. Have a ritual on the beach to honor Aphrodite. Make love to celebrate Pan. Go to the places where they are. Do what they do. Think like they think.

Use More Chakras

Chapter 2 discussed the chakras that reside in our bodies, but there are other chakras that exist outside of our bodies. The earth chakra exists far below us, in the heart of the earth. It's the earth's dense, molten core. Think of it as a deeply grounding and centering place that connects all the earth's inhabitants and ecosystems together in the underworld. To connect with it, align your

chakras and envision a dark-colored cord traveling from your lowest chakra to the center of the earth. Connecting with this chakra can give you a deep earthy wisdom and groundedness.

The star chakra exists far above our heads, connecting all the earth's inhabitants to a spiritual plane in the upperworlds. Its energy feels radiant, transcendent, effortlessly enlightened, and uplifting. To connect with it, align your chakras and feel a light-colored cord emit from your crown chakra that connects you with the center of the cosmos.

Directing attention to these two other chakras at the same time can bring on an otherworldly, mystical alignment. It can help you raise a unique higher vibrational energy.

Auric Sigils

One of my favorite things to do when I'm in a higher spiritual energetic state is to draw sigils in my broader energetic field, or aura. If you have a large enough mirror, you can create a powerful visualization and can perfectly place your magical sigils or symbols.

Stare at yourself in the mirror and bring on a trance state. With a lit stick of incense or a finger dipped in oil, draw sigils in your aura around your head and shoulders. Go slowly, feeling the meaning of every curve and line of the symbol. If possible, see them glowing with power. Hold the vision of them in your aura for at least a minute, then release the vision, ground, and center. Whenever the sigils in your aura feel low, recharge them by sending them energy and envisioning them glowing again.

Recharge or Reactivate Magic

Recharging or reactivating a spelled object can be a quick way to recast or spur on your original intention. It can fire up your intentions or goals again and give you more impetus to achieve them. One example of recharging magic could be dedicating a candle to the spell jar and lighting it on top of a spell jar. You can also shake the bottle, add new things to it, or display it on your altar in a prominent place. You could also draw tarot cards for your original work. If the results don't yield sufficient results, you may wish to recast the spell or magic entirely using the same materials.

Long Rituals and Spells

Magic doesn't have to end when the circle is open. A spell or ritual can last for days, weeks, months, or even longer. It can be an intense way to energetically insist on making something happen. Focusing magic this way makes the spell stronger, extends your original willpower, and can make a big impact on your goals.

Start a long ritual off with a bang. You may wish to use a momentous event such as a new moon, an eclipse, or the winter solstice. Whichever date you use, make sure you raise a lot of energy toward it. You may also want to consider creating a special altar for this work alone. After all, if it's going to last for more than a few days, you might as well incorporate it into your decor.

Every day after you cast the spell, do something to add energy to it. Maybe you'll recharge a spell jar by shaking it and reciting the original spell, or perhaps you'll light candles on the altar. Maybe you'll draw a rune every day to learn how you can accomplish the goal on that day, or you'll place fruit or cookies out on the altar. These activities could be incorporated into your morning or night practice(s). This helps ensure that you don't forget them. The important thing is to keep building energy toward your goal.

After any successes, no matter how small, purchase or acquire something new for the altar. Good items for little successes include flowers, new candles, or new incense. This helps you acknowledge the work in a physical form and express your gratitude.

Once your long goal is finally accomplished, it's time to celebrate. Offerings and gratitude are especially important at this time. Buy something really special, such as a custom statue, a batik print, a bottle of bubbly, or a new altar item. Consider hosting a feast or a party before taking the altar down. You may wish to take down the altar as part of a ritual, perhaps on a waning crescent moon. This should also be a momentous occasion, though it doesn't have to be on a special date.

Do Magic More Often

Another way to access higher energy is to do more spiritual work more often. It's possible that the more magical work we do, the more magical energy we can handle, and, thus, the more we can work with when we do it again. It's

a spiral concept that brings us closer to becoming our most enlightened and powerful selves.

Get Outdoors and into Nature

It can be tempting to stay indoors sometimes, especially when it's extremely cold or hot, or if you're a homebody. But magical events are waiting for you just outside your comfort zone. Bundling up for a snowy winter walk or slipping out into a cool summer night is one of the most magical things you can do. It's a time when many other people may not be around and you can more clearly feel the spirits of the land. You can find magical objects, encounter different energies, and witness the cycles of nature better. Being more in touch with nature can help you understand your own internal cycles as well. For more about magical walks, see the section in chapter 12 called Intuitive Witch Walks.

Compare Your Spiritual Work to Other People's

Research how other people work. Go to pagan or witch gatherings and participate in other people's rituals. How are their practices and rituals different from yours? The next time you practice or have ritual, use their methods to see if they work better than yours. You'll probably find that there's a huge difference in the energy you can command and raise. Follow whatever feels best.

Likewise, experiment with different activities to try to have a more meaningful daily practice. Use whatever works best to help you incorporate purpose and magic in your everyday life and in the times between rituals.

Astral Projection

Astral projection is when the soul leaves the body to journey to other realms. To be clear, it's not meditation or visualization or any other mental trance. It's an actual separation of the physical and the spiritual, and it's a rare witch talent that can take years or even decades to master. Some people are naturals at it and have been doing it since they were children; for others, it may never happen or only happen by accident. Because of its rarity among the general population, the stories about astral projection can seem outlandish to people who've never experienced it before. However, astral projection is real. With the

right insight and practice, you too may be able to separate your soul from your body to travel the astral realms.

Before starting, ask your spirit guide or a deity for help and protection. After you feel you have an affirmative response, you can begin. It helps to talk with your mental guardian, or ego, about the process. Let them know you're protected by your spirit guide or a deity, and that you'll return to your body if you feel unsafe.

Enter a trance state with a low level of physical, emotional, and mental energy. Your spiritual energy should be high, but not distracting. From this point, there are several methods to try to separate your etheric body from the physical body. You could imagine that your toes and head are getting longer. Activate your etheric body through vibrations. You could imagine sitting upright in bed and then jumping up toward the ceiling. Imagine that you're climbing a rope. Experiment with different techniques and during different times of day to see what works for you.

For me, astral projection feels like a slip from the body and a floating sensation, almost as if I'm falling asleep. Once you're in that state, open your eyes. You should be able to see your room from a different angle than where you're lying. For example, the ceiling might be closer, or a wall might be closer. In the astral realm, thoughts control your actions. They also act as your voice to other spirits. With a thought, rotate so you can see your resting body. If this is a true projection, you won't be able to feel your body at all, and that's fine. Your body will continue to rest without your assistance. If you get the spins in the astral realm, you can become still by thinking, "I am still." This is where practice with focused meditation and magic in the theta brainwave state can come in very handy.

Once you're certain you're in the astral realm, look around. You may see a silver cord connecting you to your body. Whether you see the cord or not, the connection between your spirit and your body exists. You may see your guardian spirit or your familiar in the room. If so, you can talk with them by communicating through thoughts. If you don't see any spirits with you, call for one of the spirits you work with regularly. Even a short conversation with them can reveal a lot of useful information.

You could also take a journey outside your resting place by desiring to be outside. Explore the energies outside and observe. You may be able to see na-

ture spirits and other strange occurrences. If you wish to see a certain person, think of them and desire to be with them. The full moon is a common time for witches to astrally project, where the witches meet in the astral realm. This may be because of the dual pulls of the moon and sun, which can extend our own energies outward as well. If you have a spiritual friend, try to meet up on the astral plane together at a certain date and time.

If you ever feel that you're not safe—for example, if you encounter a spirit with negative energy—call for your protector. You can enter your body again by thinking about it or desiring to do so.

Above all, try not to panic when you're in the astral realm. Doing so can create sleep paralysis, or being unable to move your body. This can happen when your spirit is still in the astral realm or when your spirit is present in your body. Sleep paralysis can be scary because it feels as if you're unable to move, speak, or do much of anything. If you experience it, do your best to relax. It can only be solved by completely surrendering to the process. Enter a theta brainwave trance state to accelerate the process of being in your body and being able to move again.

Some of my most spiritual occurrences have come from astral projection, so I highly recommend attempting it. Even though it can take a lifetime to master, it's worth it to try. Keep a record of your attempts to astrally travel in your book of shadows so you can see what works and what doesn't. You may also want to reference the information you gleaned from your travels later.

Ecstatic Practices

We can't talk about higher energies without mentioning ecstatic practices. These are defined as ancient or modern practices that quiet the mental guardian and promote extremely pleasurable experiences. Ecstatic practitioners cultivate a trance state rooted in pleasure and usually movement as well. If the trance is strong enough, practitioners can "lose themselves," or perhaps just lose the guardian that regulates everyday activity. They experience higher vibratory energies, specifically in the emotional and spiritual states. This can sometimes be brought on by physically or mentally exhausting themselves. Ecstatic states can be brought on by dancing for hours or until exhausted, breath work, chanting, enjoying good food and beverages (possibly to the point of intoxication), tantric sex or some other style of intense sexual activity, or the

use of entheogens or other mind-altering substances, to name a few. A ritual isn't needed to experience ecstasy. You only need a willingness to let go and a method to help you reach the ecstatic realms. Follow your bliss.

Mirror Magic

When you look in the mirror, what do you do? Do you check your teeth to see if you have food stuck between them? Do you obsess over tiny imperfections, such as a blemish that no one else sees but you? Whatever we do when we first look in the mirror is what's known as *automatic programming*. Usually, it's a fear-based action we enact to protect ourselves from appearing bad to others. In order to practice mirror magic, you must make a conscious shift from those instinctive fear-based reactions of your image to a truer, more love-based response to your reflection and your own energy. Mirror magic is a great practice, especially if you have self-image problems.

Your reflection is a product of the light (or absence thereof), the warmth or color of the light, the angle you tilt your head, the quality of the mirror, and the emotion and energy you hold. Mirrors reflect our energy back to us. If we can connect with that energy, we can create magic.

Program Your Mirror

It's easy to program a mirror to be supportive of your magic and to reflect your power back to you. I've programmed many of the mirrors in my home, and they not only make the house feel bigger, but they also keep the ambient magical energy in a higher state. If you'd like to program a mirror, wash any dust from it using charged water, if possible. Cleanse the surface by wafting burning herbs or incense over the surface. Enter a trance state and touch the mirror lightly with both hands. Recite your intention for the mirror. If your intention is for more confidence, you could say something like, "Mirror, mirror, I awaken you. May you show me my strongest, highest self. Show me the potential and grace I have inside of me. Show me the fire that burns in my heart and soul. Show me the light that sparkles in my eyes. Show me my most confident, radiant self so that I may carry that forth into the world." Move your hands across the surface to seal in the magic, perhaps finding some beautiful symmetrical dance. Before you leave, see yourself as you wish to be, with greater confidence, or whatever your intention was.

If you want to carry your mirror magic with you, program a pocket mirror or another small mirror, such as the kind that that comes with makeup (if you wear it). Using these nearly ubiquitous objects is the perfect way to reset your energy in a relatively unnoticed way in public. When you're out and about, peek at the mirror and see yourself with your intended magic. All it takes is one look, and you've reactivated it. If you use this mirror outside your home a lot, cleanse it every once in a while and reset the intention.

Self-Love Energy Ladders

Self-love is some of the most powerful magics there is. This is the perfect magic to be your own friend and extend the same respect to yourself that you'd extend to a friend. It isn't unruly or narcissistic, but rather a warm, supporting love that calms the mind.

Look at your reflection in the mirror. Stop any automatic programming that may arise and stare softly at your face. Notice what you admire most about yourself—maybe you have nice cheeks or beautiful eyes. Smile gently at yourself while practicing radical self-acceptance and love. Look beyond the surface of your skin and bring out the beauty of your soul. Breathe in love for yourself. As you exhale, give your reflection love. Receive it from your reflection with every inhale, pulling on your reflection. Repeat. Create an energy ladder between yourself and your reflection. Connect to your own heart chakra and feel the love. Let the exchange intensify.

Give yourself a compliment. Tell your reflection something like, "I love you. I adore your hair and your smile so much. I care about your feelings. You're magnificent to me." Say any other powerful affirmations, then accept these statements with grace and ease. Tell yourself thank you and mean it.

This kind of mirror magic can be used for self-healing. It's a great way to remove energetic blocks, cultivate a love of our perfect imperfections, and be present in the moment. If this practice makes you feel uncomfortable, imagine that you're saying these kind and true words to your higher self. Know that they see you that way, certainly. Or pretend you're saying those things to your best friend or that they are saying them to you. With time, it will become easier to accept love from yourself. It's magical indeed to have true compassion for yourself.

Enchanting Your Reflection

Mirror magic can be used to enchant our appearances through glamor. To enchant yourself, enter into a trance state and stare at your reflection. Tilt your head different ways until you see yourself in a new light. See yourself as beautiful or handsome. Turn up the charm. Put stars in your eyes until you see them sparkle in your reflection. Use your will to change your appearance slightly. See yourself as any number of things—younger, older, more desirable, and so on.

Like energetic cloaks and crowns, enchanting and glamor require focus and energy to maintain. It's best used for short periods of time, such as a performance, a speaking engagement, or a photo shoot.

Visions

Come close to the mirror—very close. Stand until your nose is almost touching the mirror, but far away enough that you don't have double vision. Stare deep into your eyes and enter a trance state. Let your eyes become portals to another world. Allow the world around you dissolve into nothingness. You may see yourself as eyes without a face. Go deeper into the trance. Can you see yourself with a different face, or with different clothing, or in a strange environment? These could be past-life visions. You can also see yourself as your true self, as pure energy, as some other magical entity, or as otherkin.

Attuning to Higher Energies

Every intuitive practice and ritual you perform increases your awareness, abilities, and power. With regular practice, the energy you command at rituals will become available whenever you need it, including in your daily life. Higher states of energy can help you increase your magic and channel what you desire. Practice of higher energy magics can be hard, but it's worth it because it deepens your intuitive witchcraft abilities and your life immensely.

It's possible your magical methods will look different from what's in this chapter. It's not meant to be a catchall of all possible methods, but rather a springboard to help you see what's available and reevaluate your practice. Use your intuition to explore other ways to raise energy. As always, use whatever works.

Further Reading List

Mueller, Mickie. *The Witch's Mirror.* Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2016.

Parma, Gede. *Ecstatic Witchcraft: Magick, Philosophy, and Trance in the Shamanic Craft.* Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2012.

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Chapter 11

Looking into the Void

While walking through the ancient forest, you come across a sparkling black lake that stretches as far as your eye can see. After a few more steps, you see black waves lapping lazily against a perfect sandy shore. It's darker here, and after a while, you realize it's permanently night. Pools of dark water lie on the beach, reflecting an egg-shaped moon that hangs low above the water. With the continual lapping sound of the gentle waves, you begin to feel entranced. Your eyes adjust to the darkness and its unique beauty. You could walk back to the forest, where the sunlight shines dappled through the leaves, but this world is wondrous in its own way. You feel that you could stare into the mystical black waters. Something washes up on the shore. What is it?

Looking into the void is about learning how to see in the dark. *The void* is a term intended to contain the fathomless mysteries of advanced witchcraft. If you've never looked into the void of your own existence, it may be time to venture into the unknown. This chapter will guide you through several practices to encounter the void, both within and without. Its topics include dream witchery, shadow work, journey to the otherworlds, second sight, and more. It isn't meant to be a comprehensive map, but rather a peek inside the various pools along the shore. Use your intuitive powers to decide which pools you'll stay at the longest.

Our Limited Human Perspectives

As we touched upon in chapter 2, we humans have a limited range of experiences with the world. We encounter a small snapshot of what the earth is like

with our narrow visual range, hearing ability, sensitivity to scents and tastes, ability to detect changes in air pressure and weight, and much more. For example, high-pitched frequency noises cause pain to a dog's ears, but they don't sound like anything to us. Visually, we can't witness a plant exchanging gasses with the air around it, but that doesn't make photosynthesis any less real. While we may not be able to see colors beyond the rainbow or detect minute levels of chemicals in the air, our otherworldly, ethereal bodies might. Accepting that there's more out there than you or I are aware of is the first step toward understanding the mysteries.

Dream Witchery

Dreams contain symbolic meanings that are both personal and cultural. When we go to sleep, our conscious minds shut down, and the world of our dreams comes alive. Dreams reveal what we may have missed in waking life and help us process events in order to better understand them. In dreams, we're also more receptive to spirits. They can communicate with us on a much easier level because in dreams it's as if we're made of thought and energy, just as they are.

Many people disregard their dreams, either purposely or accidentally, in a rushed attempt to start their days. They're missing out on a fountain of wisdom. Tuning in to our dreams can help us open our minds and experience more than we could in waking life. If you wish to look into the void that is the dreaming world, keep a pen or pencil and a dream journal by your bed to record your dreams as soon as you awaken.

Here are some ways to work with your dreams to be sure the magic doesn't slip away with the dawning light.

Interpreting Dreams Intuitively

It's important to learn how to interpret dreams correctly so you can gain the wisdom they impart. Dream books often don't have the right answers for everyone because people are so different. The meanings usually aren't personally relevant whatsoever. However, you can use your intuition to interpret objects and people in the dream.

For example, let's say I dreamed I was in my grade school classroom and I found a snake in my desk. A dream book would say something about how being in grade school means a feeling of immaturity, the desk means a career,

and the snake means fear or transformation. This dream-book result would read that I'm afraid of feeling immature at my job. This is not something I experience.

On the other hand, the intuitive Jungian method encourages us to consider how we feel about the objects in our dreams. In this case, the objects are the grade school classroom, the desk, and the snake. To me, my old grade-school classroom represents the joy of learning. The desk represents organization, something I have a natural tendency toward. Snakes are one of my favorite animals, and to me, they represent wisdom, mystery, and grace. And so, the intuitive interpretation of the dream is that I discover wisdom, mystery, and grace when I learn things and organize them. It's a far more personal interpretation and much more relevant.

Lucid Dreaming

Lucid dreams happen when we realize we're dreaming and have the power to control our dreams, to some degree. There are several things you can do in lucid dreams that you can't do in real life. You can choose to see someone special, such as a deceased loved one, a deity, or someone you need to communicate with, such as an ex. You could go places you've never been to before or revisit places you have. You could decide to fly or float, perform magic, or have a sexual experience. The list of things you can choose to do in your dreams is nearly endless. Inciting lucid dreams is an especially rewarding practice because we can receive answers and resolutions to problems that aren't achievable in our daily lives. When we sleep, our symbolic right brain wants to work on things. We might as well be present and create the circumstances we wish to occur.

There are two basic methods of lucid dreaming. The first involves setting up an expectation before you go to sleep. To do this, first think about your typical dreamscape. What emotions are brought up? Who or what dream locations seem to be recurring? What do you want to dream about? For example, if you want to spend time with a deceased loved one, think of their essence, their image, their scent, and the tone of their voice. Create a symbol to visualize while still fully engaging with the essence of that person or idea as you fall asleep. It can be as simple as a letter or a number. This is a subtle way of sneaking into the subconscious through the back door and can bring you to what you desire.

The other way to incite a lucid dream is when you're in the dream. A good way to do so is to be present in everyday life and notice things. This action will be repeated in your dreams when you look for surreal aberrations or things that are too strange to be real. Try to turn on the lights, or try to read words. If you find you can't do these everyday activities easily, you're in a dream. Take charge of that moment to seek what you're looking for. Usually, a simple thought of the item or person will bring them to you. If you don't have a particular goal in mind, you can perform any kind of magic, including manifestation, sex magic, or healing. You can speak with your spirit guide, the gods, or a particular person. If nothing else, you can have superpowers in your dream. You could experience just about anything. As an air sign, I tend to float and fly a lot. I've even performed an out-of-body experience while sleeping.

The subconscious and right brain are willing to work with us every single night. We only need to pay attention and seize the moment.

Dream Initiation

You can use dreams to interact with spirits as well as powerful and wise parts of ourselves, especially when you feel weak and disempowered. I'll never forget the time I met Baba Yaga in a dream. She's a mythical crone from Slavic cultures who lives in a hut perched atop enormous chicken legs. Some people see her as a wise elder who helps people in challenging times. She is also known to be a trickster, as seen in the stories where she creates daunting tasks for the children who disturb her. She's also seen by some as a scary death witch who has a fence made of the bones and heads of the people she has killed.

The first time I dreamed of meeting her, I was going through a rough spot in life. In my dream, I climbed a thick, ancient tree trunk. I had no idea where I was going, but I instinctively kept climbing. My shoes grasped the rough, shaggy bark as I climbed up and up and up. Finally, I reached the base of a tree house. Pushing open on a trapdoor, I climbed up and stepped into a tree house with a fireplace on one side. An old woman dressed in gray frowned at me from the fiery hearth. Her face was lined and gray, with warts and pockmarks. She stirred a cauldron over a fire.

I knew she was Baba Yaga instantly, but I wasn't afraid. What more did I have to lose? I trudged toward her small kitchen table and collapsed into a chair. A feeling of surrender came over me, as if I were finally feeling the grav-

ity of my bad situation and how trapped I felt. Despite Baba Yaga's fierce glare and all the scary things I'd heard about her, I wanted nothing more than to embrace her and sob in her arms.

"So." Baba Yaga evaluated me with sharp, hooded eyes. "You want to be a witch."

I nodded, feeling a deep resonance in my heart. It was as if she had read the truth written on my soul, only I hadn't known it was there until she said it. I wanted to own my own power instead of giving it away to others. I wanted to be stronger.

She turned away from me. For a moment, I was unsure about my fate. *Was she going to boil me alive?*

Baba Yaga ladled something from the cauldron into a wooden bowl. She hobbled toward me and nudged the bowl into my hands. "Eat."

I swallowed a mouthful of hearty potato soup. It was delicious, but I was so overcome with sadness that I could barely eat. It was all I could do to not cry into the soup.

Baba Yaga squinted at me. "You know, it's a hard path."

I nodded. "I know."

She sighed and walked back to her hearth. "Well then, let's get started."

I don't remember anything that happened after that. When I awoke, I was thrilled. I felt more liberated and powerful than I had in a long time. Baba Yaga had taken me under her wing! I felt like I'd just been initiated. I was so honored that she had taken me on as an acolyte.

Five or six years later, I dreamed of her again. My life had settled down, and things were now looking good. The decisions I made were wiser and more grounded. They came from a place of self-security instead of a feeling of disempowerment. In my dream, I climbed up the wide tree trunk easily. My feet knew where to step, as if they had trod in these same places hundreds of times. I opened the tree house trapdoor with a light heart, feeling as if I were coming home.

Baba Yaga smiled at me kindly from the hearth. "You're ready to be on your own now. You don't need me anymore."

I shook my head. I wanted to stay longer. I wanted to come back to her kooky tree house again and again. Worst of all, I didn't remember any of the lessons she'd taught me.

She nodded sagely. "You're ready."

She sent me out of her hut that day. I'm sad to say that I haven't been back since. I suppose I haven't needed to. I sometimes wonder what lessons she taught me in those dreams I've forgotten. Perhaps I absorbed them without remembering them. The difference in my life between the first dream and the second is quite astounding. I grew in terms of confidence, spirituality, maturity, and so much more. While I've had other dream initiations before, this is my favorite one. Baba Yaga and I still have a connection. I value her so much for helping me in my time of need.

EXERCISE

DREAM INITIATION

Before going to sleep, set an expectation that you'll receive a dream initiation. Create a symbol for it and meditate on its essence, feeling all aspects of it as you fall asleep. When you are in dreams, search for this symbol and the person to give you an initiation. As soon as you awaken, write down all you can remember. If you don't receive an initiation, or don't remember it, ask again until you receive it.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

Second Sight

Lisa Bland

Here in my home province of Nova Scotia, with rural and seafaring roots, many people simply refer to a gift of visions as "the sight." This use of the third eye is intuitive and filled with a deep knowing that cannot always be explained. Second sight is the use of the psychic senses and the third eye to sense and see beyond the physical world before us. Visions can come as intuitive flashes before something happens, as with premonitions, or they can be things that no longer exist or never have existed in our world physically, as with forerunners (signs that warn of an impending death), ghosts, and the ethereal realm. As witches, we can tap into this sight and experience visions to enhance our magic. There are many ways to tap into this intuitive aspect of our magic, and I want to highlight a simple ritual you can perform to allow the psychic mind to open up to visions.

Bring with you a stone or crystal for grounding yourself, an environmentally friendly offering (birdseed, fruit native to your region, natural tobacco, etc.), a comfortable seat or blanket to sit on, a journal, and a pen. Find somewhere out in nature where you will not be disturbed; a comfortable space near a tree or stream is perfect. Create sacred space in a manner that is appropriate for your practice. Get comfortable and relax into a trance state. Be aware of your surroundings but fully relaxed, with a relaxed gaze. Call upon any guides you wish to work with and ask them to support and help this working for your highest good.

Speak, chant, or sing: "I call upon my second sight; I honor my second sight; I see through my second sight." Repeat this until you lose focus on it. If this feels uncomfortable to you or awkward, it is taking you in the right direction. Opening the second sight can be challenging when you haven't attempted it before, and it may take effort to get yourself into the magical mindset where it will work.

Slowly glance around the environment without judgment, fear, or doubt. With your softened gaze, take note of what is beyond your physical eyesight. Reflect on what it may mean and record it in your journal. After the exercise, you can review your writing, so try to just allow the experience to happen without doubt or judgment. Continue this exercise until you feel your second sight getting tired, just as our physical eyes do.

Finish your ritual with an offering of gratitude to your guides and the land spirits. Close your sacred space in whichever manner is appropriate to your practice. Ground yourself by holding your stone and touching the earth.

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Divination

Divination is a way of looking into the void and reading what's floating in the ethers. It can tell you the truth or information about the past, present, or future. It's one of the most common witch abilities and, in my opinion, one of the most valuable. It can be a powerful way for you to discern the possibilities available to you. If you've ever received a bad divination reading, it's possible the reader didn't connect with your energy. Learning to divine for yourself can skirt that problem and might even produce better readings. Before performing any divination work, perform a light cleansing, center, and align. Enter a trance state if it feels right.

Tarot Cards, Runes, and Oracle Cards

I've been reading tarot since I received my first deck from my mother at the age of eleven. At first, I did exactly what the guidebooks told me to do. However, my answers always seemed more random than meaningful. Once I learned how to use intuition with them, my insights increased significantly. This section contains a few tips and tricks for using intuition with tarot cards, runes, and oracle cards.

Begin by intuitively choosing which deck or runes you'll use for your reading. Each has a different flavor of energy and relates to you in a different way. Perhaps you'll feel drawn to one or another, or you may feel that one has an answer for you.

My favorite way of selecting a card or a rune is by using *intuitive touch*. Unpack the cards or runes, and shuffle or mix them until they "feel right." The energy should feel mixed up and as if your energy is spread throughout them. If possible, lay them on the floor face down and move them around with your hands. I like to shuffle them this way until I've touched every single one at least once. At this point, you can draw them all back together or leave them as they are. Before drawing a card or a rune, consider what question you will ask. Only ask one question per draw to avoid confusion.

To select a card or a rune based on intuitive touch, ask your question and run your receiving, or nondominant, hand over them at least once before selecting an area to further concentrate on. Use your fingers to touch them. Through your fingertips or your palm, feel which card or rune feels right and draw it. It could help if you look away from them while you do this. A card drawn from intuitive touch may pertain to intuition, emotions, or the body.

A similar approach to intuitively selecting a card or rune can be taken using a visual method, *intuitive sight*. Fan the cards or runes out in a similar manner and ask a question. Look at the cards with a soft gaze and with your third eye open. Let your gaze pass over all the cards at least once. See if a card is trying to get your attention. It may look different from the others, appear to glow, or stand out for another reason. Draw the card that looks most visually appealing. A card drawn with intuitive vision can represent mental, spiritual, and psychic energy.

Another intuitive reading is *spirit speak*, or when a card or rune flies out of the deck or turns over unexpectedly. This can happen when you're shuffling

them, or when you're passing a hand over them while they're on the floor or a table. If any of them fly out or turn sideways, stop and look at them. These are often messages from spirits, the gods, or your subconscious.

I use intuitive tarot every day. After choosing a few cards, I leave them out for the entire day so I can return to them if I need more information or to look at them later on that day. The next morning, I look at the cards and think about how that energy showed up. This practice helps me intuitively evaluate precisely what the cards mean for me personally.

As you gain wisdom about what each of the cards or runes means for you, write down your personal meanings in your book of shadows. You may also want to consider having at least two decks or sets of runes. That way, you can use one for daily use and one for rituals. This lets you leave a card out on your altar without playing with less than a full deck.

Pendulums

A pendulum is a lightweight object such as a crystal or charm attached to a short chain that is dangled in one's energy field. A necklace can be used as a pendulum if it's removed from the neck, and the chain or cord is wound around one's finger to make it shorter. Pendulums can be used to communicate with the intuitive subconscious or a spirit. Pendulums "read" our energy unlike any other form of divination, as it mimics our energetic frequencies with its swings. Several guidebooks advise you to tell the pendulum which way is yes and no, but I've found that the best practice is to listen to it. This is because different spirits and different pendulums have different ways of communicating.

To use a pendulum, dangle it in your energetic field. I find this is best accomplished either above my head or in front of my throat or chest. Center your energy and align your chakras. Start by asking questions that have simple yes-or-no answers, such as your name and age. Ask a few questions that have "yes" answers before turning to questions that have "no" answers. This will help you clarify which ways the pendulum swings for the different answers without it getting too wobbly at first. After establishing directions, continue asking questions to which you don't know the answer. If the sway of the pendulum is messy, be patient and ask clarifying questions. Use your intuition to ask the right questions and to know when to delve deeper.

Book Divination

One of my favorite ways to divine is through book divination. Without looking, select a book from a bookshelf. Flip through the pages until it feels right, then open it. While still keeping your eyes averted, run your finger down the page, again until it feels right, and stop. Start reading where your finger is. Although these answers are usually quite random, they can be very insightful. There have been times when the message was the absolute truth and precisely what I needed to know. An alternative to reading where your finger lands is to start reading at the beginning of a sentence or paragraph.

Scrying

Scrying is one of the more difficult witch talents to master, but a very visual person will likely find good footing here. Enter a trance and soften your gaze so you're looking both upon and into an object. The best objects for scrying are a black mirror, a pool of water, a television screen filled with static, a crystal ball, a flame, or a crystal that has some clarity and some opacity. Get close and let your eyes blur a little. Let shapes arise, as if you're watching a dream. You may even see a story play out. Use your intuition to interpret what you see. A deep trance and practice are essential tools for this work.

Fire Divination

If you're partial to fire or candles, you can practice fire divination. Set a fire or light a candle. Pay attention to the flickering of the flame until you feel you have a steady reading on what's normal for the fire. Align with the candle or fire for a moment, then ask it to give you signs in response to your questions. As you ask questions, the fire may stay steady, flicker, die down, blow smoke in your face, or even pop. Use your intuition to draw answers.

Shadow Work

Healing your shadow is one of the most valuable things you can ever do, but it's not easy work. Even though it's uncomfortable, we all must face our shadow and see the things we don't want to see. This next section deals with everything from the creation of the shadow, facing the shadow, listening to what it has to say, healing it, and reintegrating ourselves. Read on with a brave heart and know that this work will integrate you into a more whole and present being.

Creating the Shadow

We create what's known as a *shadow self* whenever we ignore feelings of discomfort or when we ignore our intuition. Pretending something isn't really happening and ignoring uncomfortable feelings is a common way of dealing with hard situations. It makes life easier in the moment, but it's not ideal. When we split ourselves in two, one part of us feels better in the moment, but our shadow self feels all the unease we can't handle. The shadow sees the disservices we don't want to see. It hears all the words we long to forget. It feels the hurt and pain we can't tolerate. Blind to the negative aspects of our lives, the rest of us can carry on, working and surviving with a bad situation.

Whether it's intentional or not, when this happens, we've given up a piece of our soul and intuition in order to feel numb. With a shadow self, it's easier to tolerate abusive situations, to be around people who take advantage of you, and to live in an unsafe neighborhood. We carry our shadow selves as a heavy, invisible burden. We can't bear to look at them because it would mean owning up to the fact that we've been through some pain and we deserve better. It would mean admitting the truth, that we lied to ourselves and told ourselves we were okay when we weren't. Looking at the shadow means facing the fact that our hurting selves deserve to be seen, heard, and respected. It means that changes and healing need to happen, and that takes work. Work and talking are scary to the frightened person who created the shadow.

If we're not careful, or if we live in an extremely repressive environment, we'll keep giving away even more and more of ourselves, creating shadows left and right, until we only have a sliver of our whole selves left. When this happens, we'll feel utterly lost. Our shadows will gather around us so much that it'll be like we're wearing horse blinders and only able to see what's right in front of us. The mere act of carrying our shadows around will be so draining that it'll feel like we're wading through water.

Facing the Shadow and Listening

As intuitive witches, it's our path to see things as they are, to stand in our power, and to get to work making changes. It's not our path to give into popular reality, in which only a select few have power. We have the abilities and the wisdom.

Because the shadow isn't something we can easily see, we have to make an immense effort to turn our eyes inward to see it. We have to look into our

dreams and the void. We have to be in our bodies and feel the discomfort. We have to be aware of the energetic undercurrents that created the shadow and that are perpetuating it. Was there a moment when you gave your authority away or when someone took it? Did you ignore your feelings or deny what happened? Go into that moment with a soft, easy gaze and a trance mind. See what you didn't want to see. Hear the words that were spoken. Feel the pain. Relive the moment in detail so that you can fully acknowledge it, in the hopes of moving through it. Face your beautiful, brave shadow and ask it questions: "Why did we feel uncomfortable? What did we survive that was unfair? Why did we feel unsafe? Why did we hide you?" Listen to the answers to get to the root of the problems.

Another way to get in touch with the mystery of our shadows is through *trance writing*, which is sometimes called *automatic writing*. To trance write, induce a trance that makes your mind feel open. Touch upon the sore spot of emotions and start writing. You can write about anything and everything. It can be an emotional purge or an exploration of memories. Write down any truths that need to be exposed to bring them into the light. Get it out and onto the paper. Ask the shadow to acknowledge what happened. Start writing and mentally step away from the process, keeping the writing tool going. When you feel tired, come back to reality and read what you wrote.

You can also try automatic drawing or painting, again in a trance state. Use these intuitive arts to explore your shadow side and give your hidden emotions an outlet as opposed to brushing it all under the rug. This will be especially helpful for people who are not very verbal. Whatever comes up, witness it with compassionate understanding and an open heart.

EXERCISE

LISTENING TO THE SHADOW

What malignant areas of your energy have you been ignoring? Is there a situation causing conflict, where you've ignored your gut feeling? Think about it and, if possible, write or draw about it. Bring that hidden feeling into the light of your consciousness. Ask your shadow how it was created and why. Listen to the answers.

Healing the Shadow Self

Your wound and shadow may not have been caused by you, but it is your responsibility to seek healing and make yourself whole. You're the only person who can start this healing process. This is the best thing you can do for yourself, and now that you know the cause of your shadow, you can start to heal it.

Hug your shadow and energetically accept the missing piece of yourself back into your soul. Hold it close and change the vibration from lack or fear into something more powerful. Accept any feelings or emotions that come up. You may need to accept something else as well, such as the truth of a situation, your ability to take back your power, the need to love yourself more, or the fact that things need to change in order for you to feel okay.

Use your intuition to make changes to correct the situation. Take steps to correct the cause of the problem (if applicable), so the soul-shattering experience will not be repeated. Equip yourself with more skills on all the energetic realms—physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Meditate on wholeness, holding the shadow self close and changing the vibration until you pulse as one. Find your strength. Get help from healers if they're sympathetic. Do the good, hard work. The more you practice it, the easier it will get.

A reintegrated soul could be thought of as a shattered statue that's repaired with gold seams, as in the Japanese tradition *kintsugi*. We've all been shattered at one point or another. The golden veins running through our former cracks imply there's a greater strength, integrity, and value compared to what existed before. You may still feel the places in your body that were cracked, but after the shadow-healing exercise, you'll likely have less of an inclination to split again.

Rest and feel at peace with yourself. You do not have to continue fighting with yourself or against the same enemy. If a similar situation arises, you will be a different person, and you will be stronger for having faced it. Your ability to circumvent issues will also be stronger.

Shadow work is not always a one-time session, and that's okay. You may have to sit with those uncomfortable emotions again to reprocess them and reintegrate yourself. Some of us need to shatter several times in order to truly heal our fundamentally broken structures. We may break and be repaired in gold multiple times before we realize our true worth—we're worth our entire weight in gold, and then some.

Many people find value in working with a psychologist, shaman, or some other guide when doing shadow work. Find someone who can help you see where you went wrong, how to reclaim the lost parts of yourself, and how to avoid it in the future. Work on reclaiming your power by intuitively developing practices and rituals to support you.

EXERCISE

INTEGRATE THE SHADOW

After listening to the shadow, acknowledge their emotions. Hug them and energetically accept the missing piece of yourself back into your soul. Hold it close and change the vibration from lack or fear into something more powerful. Write down three ways to improve the situation. Post the list somewhere you'll see every day, and make the changes to your life.

The Otherworlds

Deep in the old wild woods stands an ancient tree with myriad branches that touch the clouds. The tree feels like a gentle, wise, and powerful being. In its presence, you feel completely aware of the present moment, and you're in tune with your own energy on all levels. Below your feet, you feel the rumblings of something primal. It feels earth-bound, animalistic, heavy, emotional, and meaningful. You intuitively know that lower-frequency spirits, such as familiar, animalistic, elemental, and other spirits, walk these realms. Above, beyond the branches and leaves, you sense something light, mystical, and elevated. With your second sight, you catch glimpses of higher-frequency spirits soaring and playing in that bright, magnificent world.

Of course, this is no normal tree. It is the tree of the world. Many pagan cultures from across the world have ancient myths or legends about the tree, including Norse, Finnish, German, Slavic, Turkish, Mongolian, Yoruban, some Native American tribes, Siberian religions, Baltic, Mayan, Aztec, Chinese, and Hindu, to name a few. It's a nearly universal concept, as is people traveling to the otherworlds through the tree.

Many cultures teach that the tree represents the three levels of our existence or consciousness and the energies that exist there. Our waking world, in the middle, is the least conscious, but it combines all three aspects to some

degree (upper, middle, and under). The world tree demonstrates the holistic interconnectedness of our bodies, emotions, mind, and spirit. Any problems or exaltations are reflected in all three worlds. This multilevel awareness is echoed in the phrase "as above, so below," which is common in many pagan circles.

Visit the otherworlds through meditation to heal and explore aspects of yourself and different energies. You can also communicate with all kinds of spirits in each of the realms. You'll find ghosts, the fae, elementals, nature spirits, and more in each of the realms.

If you wish to travel to the underworld, attune to the slow, deep theta waves that exist near the boundary of sleep. If you want to see the upperworld, elevate your mind and channel bright, high-frequency gamma waves.

Once you are in a trance state, see yourself before the world tree. Look for an entrance. It might appear as a door, a crack in the trunk or a doorway, or a hollow rise in its roots. Enter the tree. The inside could look like a vast hall or a simple round room. Look for a method to get to the level above or the level below. It could be a staircase, a ladder, a rope, a vine, a plant stalk, or even a trail of smoke.

To access the underworld, travel down until you're deep within the earth. The underworld usually appears as a darker version of earth with ancient trees. It's dimly lit, as if by the light of the moon only. Everything appears in its most raw form here. It's a useful place to visit to see things as they really are and for emotional and physical healing.

One tradition I studied with guided me to greet an animal in the underworld. This animal acted as a guide and assisted me with healing my body. Together, we removed the negative energy that was lodged in a body double of myself lying on the ground. We scooped out handfuls of what looked like insects and dirt from my body. Once all the foreign materials were removed, we directed light into my body double and aligned my chakras. It was an effective and powerful healing, especially for physical and emotional problems.

In the underworld, you may see creatures or lower vibrational spirits, which aren't necessarily bad. Ask them if they have a message for you. If you wish, you can commune with them and learn from their wisdom. When you're ready to leave, travel back to the same entrance and rise up through the same method as you descended.

To experience the upperworld from within the tree, travel upward. Feel your frequency rise and become more blissful. There may be a barrier you have to break through to enter this realm. Push through it and find yourself in a place of light and wonder. The upperworld appears different to different people, but it is always brilliantly lit. The dominant energies are bliss and wisdom. Here you can experience activation of the higher chakras, spiritual insights, inspiration, and clarity. You may interact with higher-level spirits, who can appear as fae, points of light, crystalline beings, and other higher-level beings. You may speak with them or align with the energy to heal emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. Return in the same manner you entered.

When traveling the otherworlds, use your intuition to determine how you might be able to heal and which spirits to speak with. You may want to record what happened in your book of shadows so you can research it later.

If you're interested in learning more about specific types of shamanism, I advocate for learning from people who are from the source; otherwise, learn from people as close to the source as possible. This will give you a more unfiltered wisdom and also extends respect to the cultures where the knowledge came from.

RITUAL

THREE OTHERWORLDLY CIRCLES

So far, we're worked with spiritual energy on the middle plane of the world. These circles will be cast first with the energies of the underworld, then with the energies of the upperworld, and, finally, all three worlds at once.

Underworld Circle: With deep breaths, enter a theta trance. Cast a circle using the energies of the underworld. How does it feel different? Walk around and feel the energy in the circle. Note how it feels different from how the energy in your usual circle feels. Think about what kind of work this type of circle would be best suited for. When you have gained some knowledge about the underworld circle, release it in the same manner it was cast.

Upperworld Circle: Enter a gamma trance state and cast a circle for the upperworld. Breathe in the energy and feel the vibrations. How does it

feel? What are you inclined to do in this kind of circle? When you have gleaned some insight about the upperworld, release the circle in the same manner it was cast.

Three Worlds Circle: Take a deep breath and realign to a theta trance state. Cast a circle with the energies of the underworld. When you feel the underworld energy is present, consciously raise your brainwaves to a normal mindset (beta waves) and cast a circle for the middle world. Take another deep breath and channel a gamma wave state. Cast a circle for the upperworld. This kind of circle may feel as if the energies are layered or stacked on top of each other. You may feel a full-body magical rush. When you feel all three levels present, take another deep breath and think about what kind of magic would be most benefited by these energies. When you are ready, or if you start to feel dizzy or overwhelmed, open the circles in the manner they were cast, starting with the upperworld, continuing through the middle world, and finally, releasing the underworld. Ground and center afterward.

Write down how each of these circles feels different in your book of shadows and which practices you thought would be most beneficial for those kinds of energies. Use these otherworldly circles for compatible rituals and magics. This last practice, with the three circles, may be difficult to master at first, but with time, it will become easier to channel all the energies.

Psychic and Empathic Moments

Psychic and empathic experiences are often side effects of having a higher spiritual energy frequency. This is because when we're connected to the energies around us, information and emotions can flow more freely. These psychic and empathic moments can be a sign of a blossoming spirituality and, in the right environment, might feel exciting. Or, depending on the energy or information received, they can also feel overwhelming or disturbing.

If you have these abilities, you have the power to choose either to interact with them or to shut your connections down. Take charge of your reactions. Use your intuition about the energy at hand to decide when to look deeper into something and when to walk away. If you feel overwhelmed, know that

you don't have to react to those experiences. Feeling another person's pain isn't necessarily a sign that you should talk with them about it—the person sending it might just have a strong, domineering energy that you're picking up on. Summon the strength and ability to say no and close down your energetic valves, and do so often. Refuse to engage with anything that isn't for your highest good. You have the power to control how you spend your time. Grounding mechanisms, closing off, and having medium level energy will help immensely.

Be respectful of your psychic and empathic experiences. Always be truthful and keep your humility within sight. Don't be too boastful of your experiences, even if they are mind-blowingly amazing and true. These gifts may come from a source that doesn't condone self-aggrandizing. Also, these experiences may come and go over time. Go with the flow and let the good moments empower you. Don't get too attached to getting the same insights all the time.

Psychic and empathic moments don't happen for everyone, though, and that's okay. They're not necessarily a goal of intuitive witchcraft. No one person is better than another for their gifts and abilities. If you don't specialize in this area, it's likely that you're more proficient in other areas.

Your Personal Void Experience

Keep delving deeper into whatever void art you're passionate about. Be patient with yourself. Unraveling the mysteries takes time. For many people, it takes years, if not decades, to become proficient. If it were easy, everyone would master all the void arts, but that's not the case. These are rare paths, indeed. Dedication into these advanced realms can teach you more about yourself and the energetic nature of the world than most other practices.

Although the topics in this chapter can be thrilling and insightful, it's important to not get fixated on gazing into the void or constantly traveling the astral realms or the otherworlds. Come back to the middle world and the enchanted forest. We need you in it. Share your knowledge with your friends about the places you've been. Integrate your newfound wisdom with your practices and rituals.

Further Reading List

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Chapter 12

Living in the Spiritual Flow

By this point, your practice is firmly established. You've faced your shadow and can raise energy like a wizard. You've traveled through the deepest realms and came back more whole than ever. It's likely that you can navigate through the world with greater ease. You may be feeling that there's more to the mundane world than meets the eye. If so, you may have found a loophole known only to highly advanced practitioners. This chapter is about integrating everything you've learned and choosing to keep spiraling up. Some of these practices may seem philosophical or hypothetical until you experience them. Keep going. Open your mind to the possibilities of a truly energetic world.

The Flow State

Remember the witch's hat in chapter 2? It had a platform of physical energy, with ever-smaller stacks of emotional energy, mental energy, and spiritual energy at the pointy tip. The purpose of this diagram was to demonstrate that we experience spiritual energy for the least amount of time compared to the other life energies. It also shows that it's more accessible when our other life energies are stable and maintained.

However, this isn't the whole truth. Wise witches know that when our physical, emotional, and mental energies have been kept in a good state, the spiritual energy portion of the witch's hat can become bigger. In other words, spiritual energy can trickle down into our mental, emotional, and physical levels, making mundane activities like washing the dishes feel like pure bliss.

When our spiritual energies cascade into more of our daily lives, we call this *living in the flow*. This feels a little like falling in love, except without another person—it's more like falling in love with the magic of life. It can feel simultaneously grounding and elevating. Everyday things start to become a little easier, and your manifestation and magic become more potent than ever before. Your empathic and psychic skills are likely to come on stronger than ever before too. You may even have the feeling that life is opening up for you.

A unit of time spent in the flow is called a *flow moment* and is characterized by a heightened sense of spiritual awareness and a sense of timelessness. A flow moment can last for a few seconds, a minute, ten minutes, two hours, a whole day, or even longer. They're precious, and we should appreciate those moments of enchantment whenever we experience them. They may not always last as long as we'd like, but with regular practice and continued work on the foundational energies, we can experience flow moments on a regular basis. It's an advanced art, though. Someone with a severe emotional wound such as self-loathing wouldn't be able to sustain a flow moment for very long. That's why it's so important to face our shadows and build secure foundations with the other life energies.

Ideally, the goal is to incite flow moments whenever possible, build them up to last longer, and string them together so that life becomes a series of flow moments. The most sustainable way to do this is to have the flow moments in the middle ranges of energies. This makes sense, considering that it's hard to sustain high frequencies of energy for long. This helps prevent burnout from using higher energies. If you can use middle-range energy for flow moments, you'll be able to experience them at work and still be able to perform your job duties and communicate without getting too deep. Reserve higher spiritual energy for rituals, meditations, and random moments when you feel too blissful to not give in.

Symptoms of Spiritual Flow

When the conditions are right and spiritual energy has infiltrated into a larger slice of the triangle, it touches our other energy centers. Physical signs of being in the flow could include goosebumps, an inner glowing, a tingling scalp, a full-body buzz, and activation of certain chakras. Emotional signs include feelings of bliss, acceptance, the feeling of being connected emotionally to others,

empathy, and an open, happy feeling. Mental symptoms of the flow may include inspiration, motivation, a clear mind, insight, and acuity. Spiritual signs of the flow may include activation of the third eye, psychic and empathic powers, the ability to see across time and space, the ability to read the world's portents, and transcending mundane issues. The sensations can last for a moment or much longer and may recur if the flow state is reactivated. Experiencing these symptoms is a good sign that we're on the right path.

Bringing on a Flow State

My flow states come to me most often when I'm doing my regular spiritual work—when I have intuitive practices, perform rituals, write in my journal, face my shadows, and do the good, hard work to cut extraneous energy zappers. Many people find the flow state in physical activities like dancing, walking, or running. They can also be brought on by reading spiritual books and meditating. Sometimes, they can be incited by a huge decompression, such as a good pagan gathering or a vacation.

Another way to enter the flow state is to find ways to ground and elevate simultaneously. You could practice simultaneously activating your connection with your star chakra and your earth chakra, as mentioned in chapter 10. Using minerals, crystals, and stones is another way to ground and elevate at the same time. I wear a few grounding and elevating stones in my bra to help me do this. If you don't wear a bra, or if the idea of wearing a loose rock in your bra doesn't sound like a good time, you can wear a necklace, put stones in your pocket, or keep them close to you some other way. Ideally, they will either touch your skin or be one layer away from it for maximum benefit.

My favorite grounding stone is black tourmaline, which resonates with the lower chakras, clears away negativity, and protects my energy. Other grounding stones you may consider include hematite, pyrite, smoky quartz, and jasper. My favorite elevating stone is selenite, which opens the upper chakras and facilitates a spiritual connection. Other elevating stones you may consider include apophyllite, moldavite, rainbow moonstone, or Herkimer diamonds. Find a pair of grounding and elevating stones that work for you.

I've also found that moving at my own physical pace can bring on the spiritual flow state. This was a hard lesson for me to learn, considering that I was once a server at a huge restaurant where the motto was "turn as many tables

as quickly as possible." When I was able to slow down and work at a pace that was more sustainable to me, I got closer to the flow state. The quality and accuracy of my work improved, I was more present at my tables, and the tips were bigger too. Part of working at your own pace could also include not working forty hours a week at a job that's not feeding you spiritually. When I'm not working full time, I'm much more able to bring on the flow state. To find your own pace, practice presence with every step, every glance, every movement, every word, and every breath. Take your time to find your most empowering pace. Infuse purpose into every single second. Be present and find the higher energy that's hiding in the details.

Finding a flow moment can be like following a magical path with breadcrumbs that lead you onward. Once you realize how you can bring it on, you only have to find the next clue, follow it, and trust the process. Experiment with what brings your flow state on and record the results in your book of shadows.

Extending Flow Moments

Besides taking care of the base energy tasks, there are a few ways to extend flow moments to make them longer. Some of my favorite ways to accomplish this include breathing slower and deeper with intention, experiencing silence, listening to inspiring music, expressing gratitude, being in solitude, reading an inspirational book or listening to a good audio book, being in nature, meditating, limiting exposure to only include people and conversations that are uplifting, and having heartfelt, moving, and energetic rituals.

To perpetuate the flow state, be conscious of what level you're at energetically. Incorporate any of the exercises in this chapter or anything else that works to change your energy and maintain the flow state. This may take some time to master. You may only experience flow moments for a few minutes in the beginning stages, but don't give up. They'll start lasting longer soon enough.

EXERCISE

FLOW STATE EXPERIMENTS

Have you ever entered a flow state? Do you remember how you got there? Experiment with different techniques to try to enter the flow

state again. Try dancing and getting lost in the music, or try walking in nature by yourself. Meditate or raise energy until you feel strong spiritual energy flowing through your body. Enjoy the flow moment, feeling the bliss and serenity. When you feel the flow moment slipping away, try to extend it. For example, if your thoughts go to what you need to do later, return to the moment and try to get back into the flow. Eventually, it will slip away, but let it go consciously, if possible. Write down in your book of shadows about what worked and what didn't work to get you into the flow state, what helped maintain it, and how it felt.

Interpreting Omens and Signs

The otherworld speaks to us through the mundane world. Are you paying attention? There are signs, portents, and omens everywhere. These subtle events are ways that the gods, spirits, and otherworld can communicate with us. Sometimes, they're inside jokes. Other times, they're signs to take action or notice something. Often, they will be personal and relevant to the moment. They can tell you to pursue something, talk with someone, drop it and be still, or run in the opposite direction. It's possible that you received an omen to pick up this book or study intuitive witchcraft.

When you receive an omen, think about what that message means to you. Do you associate it with positive, supporting energy or with fearful, powerlessness or spiteful energy? Use your gut feeling to determine who is communicating with you and what's being said. If you don't have any association with the omen, look up its meaning and evaluate whether that makes sense to you or not. Talk with someone about what it could mean. Often times, the mere act of speaking about things clarifies them. Read on for a list of the most common omens, portents, and signs.

Symbols

Symbols seem to be one of the easiest ways for the otherworld to communicate with us. They're everywhere, and they're easy to find. You probably have a multitude of them inside and outside your home, on your commute, and at your place of work. Even tree branches can form symbols rather easily.

When I was first thinking about whether or not I should start a new spiritual endeavor, I asked my gods for a sign. That morning, I saw stars everywhere. They

seemed to beckon to me from their placement on a roof, on the side of a building, on the side of a train, on a storm drain, and more. Stars have always inspired me, so I took it as a good sign to keep going. After I acknowledged the sign, the presence of the stars faded back into the background again until they blended in with their surroundings. They no longer stood out because I didn't need the inspirational message anymore. The stars had been there the whole time, but I'd never noticed them until I'd asked for a sign.

Animal Signs

Reading the behavior of animals has long been considered an oracular art. It was said that the Egyptians watched how cats behaved in their temples to learn what the day would bring. The oracular study of birds has been known since at least Roman times. To practice receiving signs from the animal world, ask for one. When you see an animal, evaluate it. What do they look like? What are their actions? What do they represent to you? A wounded crow on the side of a road has a much different meaning compared to bunnies frolicking in your backyard. Likewise, the shabby squirrel that tries to run at you might be trying to tell you something quite different. Use personal intuitive association to decipher the language of animals and their behaviors.

Weather

Some cultures have a method of reading the sky for omens. Whenever I leave my house, I check in with the sky. The quality of the wind and the movement of branches tell me about the energies present in the external world. Clouds are also a wonderful source of signs. They're ever changing and swirling to produce shapes that are open to interpretation.

Other Common Omens

Another common omen is misreading or mishearing words. Sometimes, these reveal the truth of the matter. Overhearing a stranger's conversation can also mean something.

Is It a Sign?

Not everything is a sign. There are a few ways to tell it's an omen and not just happenstance. If the sign is repeated, like the stars I saw all over the place,

it can be an insistent sign that the gods, the spirits, or the otherworld is trying to get your attention. Be aware of repeated signs and what you're thinking around that time.

Another way to tell if something is an omen is if you notice that something is odd. For example, a butterfly in summer is common, but one in late autumn is a sign. Consider what's normal for plants, animals, and weather. Don't rely on their everyday behavior as signs as much as what seems out of place.

The timing of the sign is important too. If you ask for a sign and receive one right away, it's more likely to be from a higher source. Even if you don't ask for a sign, but something significant happens, it's most likely a sign.

The best example I have of the perfect timing of omens is a time when I was wallowing in self-pity. I said something disparaging about myself that I knew wasn't true. Immediately, a crow laughed from somewhere nearby. Its shrill voice shocked me and put me in my place. The crow is one of the animals I'm most connected with spiritually. Its laugh was not only a well-timed quip but also a message from a specific guide who had worked with me on those same issues before. I instantly shook off my bad mood and resolved to not speak about myself that way again.

Personal significance is another factor to think about when dealing with signs. Omens that happen with personal meaning to you are more relevant than signs with which you have no knowledge about. For example, maybe you don't have any associations with parakeets, so seeing one wouldn't mean anything to you. Conversely, if you grew up with them and associate them with your childhood, and you saw one in a random place, it could be a sign relating to those times or that you should get in touch with your family.

Whether the signs are good or if they portend bad times ahead, they can tell you a lot about the path you're on and where it might lead. Whenever you notice the signs, acknowledge them and give thanks. Assess your intuition about the sign and do what they indicate is necessary as soon as reasonably possible. Record the signs in your book of shadows along with what you were thinking about, what you suppose the meaning is, and what you did afterward. With time, you'll be able to find patterns in the signs and read the omens with ease.

Intuitive Witch Walks

Taking a walk every day isn't just good for your health. It's also a great way to get in touch with the natural world around you. Even if you're just looking at city trees and potted flowers, you can still connect with the earth, appreciate their beauty, and exchange energy with them.

Use intuitive witch walks to get out of your routine and explore different places by using your intuition. Go up or down streets according to your whim. You may be surprised by what you find. While on your witch walk, call forth higher energy and see what comes forth. If something happens near you, this could be an omen or "spirit speak" from a higher realm.

Collect things for your magic or your altars. There's nothing like finding a pretty rock on the side of the road, and I have more than enough of them to prove it! You may also find a beautiful specimen of a plant that would be perfect for that full moon spell. Before collecting from any living plant, ask permission from the plant spirit. Once it's received, respect its spirit by pruning only the dying leaves or parts from the undergrowth. Leave the plant with more than enough leaves or branches to thrive.

Carry jars with you in case you want to collect a little spring water, sand, or soil from areas that are sacred to you. Whenever you collect something, consider leaving behind a bit of organic matter, compost, soil, an acorn, or some other offering to thank the spirits of the land.

The Intuitive Witch Bag

The ability to work on the fly—anytime and anywhere—is a huge game upper. Why not carry magical items in a bag? You can either carry them with you or stow them in your vehicle so you can work at a moment's notice.

Stock your witch bag with items you use for practice, ritual, and spellwork. This could include ritual tools such as your book of shadows, an athame, wand, an altar cloth, or anything else you use. You could also carry essential oils, crystals or minerals, salt, herbs, acorns or leaves, resins and charcoal, bay leaves, a tea light candle, a lighter, incense, a divination tool (such as tarot cards, runes, or a pendulum), special coins, an inspirational image, a miniature statue of your favorite deity, offerings, and so on. Consider carrying something special to you, such as ocean water, soil from your home or an ancestor's grave, a feather from a bird connected spiritually to you, or an item from someone special.

You never know where you'll want to perform energy work or a ritual. Even if you're traveling far from home, you can still have some tools. Can't fly with an athame? Swap out a crystal for the same purpose. Can't have more than a few vials of liquid on an airplane? Harvest some local water from a stream or the ocean. Tea light candles are especially nice and can be used almost anywhere to celebrate as you normally would. With supplies on-hand in your witch bag, you'll be prepared for nearly anything.

Energy Flips

Energy flips are advanced mind tricks that change bad energy or a negative experience into something good. They can help you find the flow moment again and stay in it. Some of my greatest insights and creative breakthroughs have come from this practice. However, it isn't appropriate for all problems, such as abusive relationships.

There are a few ways to accomplish an energy flip. The first is to imagine or see the benefits of why a negative event could have happened. The best example I can think of is failing out of a prestigious college my freshman year due to a horrible case of mono. After two semesters where I barely slept, I lost my scholarship and the will to learn anything. I could have viewed this as a defeat, but instead, I checked in with my intuition. I realized that I didn't actually want to study journalism, but I didn't know what I really wanted. I took six months off from school to work and get my head clear again. With some soul-searching, I realized that I wanted to study chemistry more than anything else. I enrolled in a community college with my new major and a more optimistic feeling. In my first quarter there, not only did I get a 4.0 grade point average, I also met the man who would become my soul mate and husband. That bad time I went through eventually led me to a good path. I could look back on that year of my life and mourn the waste of time, effort, and money, but I see that I had the courage to try something. Even though it didn't work, eventually, I found my way. When we look for the good in seemingly troubling times, we can receive deeper insights and know ourselves more instead of beating ourselves up for all-too-human mistakes.

Another way to execute an energy flip is to look back on your life experiences and imagine that you wanted to learn a skill. By thinking that way about troubling situations in my past, I've made peace with my younger self and became a

stronger person. For example, when I was working at a retail store in my twenties, a particularly persistent energy vampire took my time and energy on a daily basis. Instead of being mad at them because they couldn't read my subtle hints to leave me alone, I realized I needed to learn the skill of creating stronger boundaries and to stand up for myself. Learning how to say "no thanks" and disengaging from that person prevented the same lesson about personal boundaries from coming up again with someone else. It's a skill I still use to this day.

Another energy flip is transcending or transmuting a problem by having compassion. This can be for yourself or someone else. I imagine the offender as an ignorant person who doesn't know any better, which is usually the case. Sometimes, I even picture them as a baby. It's surprising (and a little disturbing) how easily I can conjure an image of them with a bonnet and a pacifier, crying their heart out in a crib. In a way, that person may be a baby emotionally. If their growth has been stunted and they can't access their spiritual energy because their emotional energies are so messed up, it's very close to the truth.

Sometimes, I look up an offensive person's astrological birth chart. I may not have the time they were born, but I can see the big picture. Through this practice, I've discovered that the people with whom I've had the biggest problems often have some of the hardest internal lives. For example, one person's chart basically said that they self-sabotage because they can't integrate the person society wants them to be with who they really are. When people like that cause problems, they're miserable, and that's the reason they're trying to make everyone else's lives worse. As long as those people aren't harming anyone, compassion (and avoidance) might be the best route.

There's another kind of energy flip that I call *bulletproof*. This practice comes easier to me when I'm in a flow moment or in a higher energetic state. The best example of this is on the internet, where trolls like to leave mean comments. When I'm bulletproof, I read their comments, but I barely register them. It's as if I have a bulletproof shield or a magical cloak that filters out their negativity. I can go on with my day as if I never read their words.

My absolute favorite energy flip is called *alchemization*. When someone says something disparaging to me, I pause, reflecting before I react. I can feel the strong energy coming off them like a heat wave. Through alchemization, I'm able to take that negative energy they're giving me and use it to propel myself in the opposite direction of whatever they're saying. The greater their hate, the

more energy I receive. It's as if their comments are a ball of fiery hot anger, and they're throwing it at me as hard as they can, but when it reaches my aura, it changes into a gift of neutral energy and lands at my feet, harmless. Sometimes, their gift gives me so much energy that it makes me laugh out loud. In these situations, I'm not trying to take anyone's energy, but a whole lot of energy is just being given to me. I'm merely changing the vibration of it and using it for my purposes. A bit of rebelliousness and thick skin helps, as well as a higher spiritual energetic state.

JOURNALING EXERCISE

ENERGY FLIP

Think of someone or something that is bothering you. Write down the details and how the issue makes you feel. Can you think of a positive reason why you might be having this experience? Could this be an opportunity to learn a skill or a lesson? Can you transmute the negative feelings by having compassion? If it's possible, can you cut someone off or cut them out of your life? Can you raise your energy and make yourself bulletproof around this problem? Or can you alchemize the negative energy into positive energy and use it for your desires? Write down which energy flip you used, how the energy flip changed your energy, and what you feel now. The next time a similar issue appears, use your new ability to make a change for the positive.

Time Witchery

Some people view time not as a scientific law of nature but rather as a way to measure moments. That's how time is thought to exist independently in different planets and galaxies. Our own experiences of time are relative, based on our present moment and different energetic states. This is how five minutes can feel like an hour or a year can feel like a couple of months. In the flow state and in rituals, we can experience a timeless feeling and a deep connection, where time becomes more flexible and elastic. This may be because our higher frequencies make us aware of the higher dimensions, which are timeless, unfathomable realms where energetic forms such as spirits, the gods, and the dead reside. These higher dimensions are remarkably similar to the stories of the afterlife from cultures around the world—in those realms, all of time is

happening all at once. We are both alive and dead, wise and childlike, and all ages we've ever lived. Some people theorize that memories of past lives are kept there too.

Time witchery is about giving and receiving messages and energy to our younger and older selves. We can accomplish this through higher energetic states. If time is indeed an illusion, it's possible we already receive and send messages through time without realizing it. If you've ever had a premonition or déjà vu, you may have already had one of these messages from out of time.

Premonitions

A premonition is an insight or vision about something that may happen in the future. These feelings or visions can come to you in a dream or at random times, such as when you're daydreaming, or you could receive a premonition from an omen. Premonitions can also be delivered from the gods as a blessing, as a warning, or to assist you in evaluating your options. But you don't have to wait for a visitation from Apollo, the Greek god of prophecy, to have a premonition. You can incite one through time witchery.

Start with an objective or a question in mind. You could ask something like where you'll be in five years or whether you should continue to play the guitar. Enter a trance state and let yourself sink deep into it. Both higher and lower brainwaves will work for this exploration. When you feel sufficiently altered, perform a visionary type of divination such as scrying, using second sight, seeing yourself as older, or feeling yourself in your older body and looking through your eyes. Use whatever divination seems to work best for you.

Look at your surroundings and feel your emotional state. Observe as many details as possible. Where are you? What are you doing? What are you wearing? Is anyone else with you? How do you feel? If the vision isn't clear, ask for a message from your future self.

You may get a glimpse of a wild future—of things you've never imagined before. Or it could be a regular, everyday moment. Your premonition could come true exactly as you saw it, or a fraction of it could come true, or none of it at all. Whatever vision you receive can frame your present motivations with reasons to keep going or to change the course completely. For that reason, the vision may not be your definitive future—rather, one possible future among many. Our day-to-day choices decide our futures, and you could go several dif-

ferent directions. The vision is still significant, though, and is an option available to you, should you choose to follow that path.

To take advantage of premonitions, incorporate conjuring them into your regular practice. The full moon is often a great time to practice the premonitory arts. Use your book of shadows to record what you see and to act as a verification tool when your premonitions come true.

Déjà Vu

Déjà vu is a French phrase meaning "already seen." It's used to describe the feeling you get when you experience the present moment for what seems like the second time. Often times, it's because you received a premonition or an omen about the occurrence. What you experience may not be the actual premonition or vision—it's more likely that you feel a connection to the premonition, or you're feeling a note that's reminiscent of it. Déjà vu often feels eerie or surreal, but don't fear it. It's proof that your psychic powers are developing, and that some visions do come true.

I've experienced déjà vu since I was a child. The strongest I ever felt it was when I had a dream that my friends and I were sitting at a picnic table. In my dream, my friend stood up and slipped on the wet grass. As she fell, her head hit the corner of the picnic table, and blood gushed out. We surrounded her, and soon ambulances and paramedics came. They strapped her onto a gurney, and I watched the ambulance drive her to the hospital. I awoke from the dream in a panic but was relieved that it wasn't real. However, months later, when the same exact people were sitting with me at a picnic table, I realized what was happening. I grasped my friend's hand and told her what had happened in my dream, warning her to be careful. Eventually, when she stood up, she didn't slip and fall. I don't know if my dream saved her from an injury, but it may be possible.

Déjà vu moments can be hugely monumental or completely insignificant. They have saved some people's lives, while other times they're just a regular everyday event. When you have déjà vu, think back to the time you received the premonition. Did anything important or insightful happen next? Did your life change course? Does your awareness of the present moment change what happens next? What do you feel the purpose of the vision was? Do you think it was sent by you or from someone else?

Some people believe that déjà vu isn't real. They think the brain misfires, temporarily forgetting the present moment, then it "remembers" it when we start paying attention. While this certainly could happen, it doesn't explain my dream. It also doesn't describe what happens when a premonition is written down days, weeks, or even years earlier than the déjà vu moment.

Whenever I experience déjà vu, I see it as a sign that I'm on the right path. It seems to happen most often when I'm living in the flow, which is yet another reason to attain a flow moment whenever possible.

Communication with Your Past Self

Just as it's possible to receive messages from our future self in the form of premonitions, it may also be possible for us to send messages and energy to our past selves. In fact, that could be what premonitions are. This form of time witchery may be the strangest magic mentioned in this book, but it is possible that energy, love, and desires could transcend time. Moreover, I like the idea of a future me sending messages to the past me, like signposts along time, showing me which paths to take. If you've ever been overcome with a sudden, strong impetus to work toward your goals, you may know the feeling. It's almost as if your past self gave you insight and energy to help you power through so the future you would be more fully realized.

Generally speaking, there are two methods when this could be helpful. The first is to heal our former selves. To do this, think of a time in your past when you were feeling really rotten. It could be during the aftermath of a bad experience or a time when you were limited by your situations. Go into a trance state and try to be in that past moment again. Go back to whatever place you were, in whatever body you had. Enliven your senses. Really be in that place and feel the energy of your former self. Once you feel that you're present in all energetic realms of the past, give yourself a hug or whatever feels most appropriate. Send healing energy through your past energetic body and into your past physical body. Align your own chakras, purge any garbage, wipe away tears, and so on. Whisper a message into your younger self's ear. Before you go, show them happy and peaceful visions of the present, or show them getting over this issue and being the person you are today.

The second way to send communications to the past deals with empowerment toward a goal. This can be employed when you want to prioritize that

goal in the past so that your present might be more fully vested and learned. Enter a trance and follow the first few steps to become one with your past self. When you're fully in the moment with your past self, share your excitement about your current goal. Describe everything you love about it and why they'll love it too. Ask them to think about it, read about it, and write about it. Share your visions and energy. Align and activate your chakras as you see fit.

These time witch hacks may or may not change our past selves on a physical level, but I do believe it's possible to change who we were on emotional, mental, and spiritual levels. This, in turn, might just change who we are in the present moment.

Channel Your Destiny

You can channel any energy you desire. Why not focus on the energy and intentions that can help you heal yourself and bring you closer to your goals? This time witchery can take place for short-term goals. It's commonly used in sports, such as when a soccer player visualizes making a goal. It can also be used for long-term goals, in visualizing the person you wish to become. Think about the person you want to be—someone who has accomplished all the goals you have. How they would live their lives? What would they wear and how would they interact with others? Bring that energy into your body and feel the difference. Let this channeled energy change how you react to the world and what you spend your time doing. You might want to meditate on the energy in the morning as part of your morning practice. You could also set alarms or remember a time throughout the day such as 11:11 to remind you of this new energy. When in doubt, think about how that truly successful or healed person would operate, and take that path.

The Best Time Witchery Hack

Of course, one of the best time witchery hacks is to be fully realized in the present moment and do everything you can to be centered and on your intuitive path. Taking the power of the present moment and using it to our advantage can slow time down to some degree and will always put us closer toward our goals. It's also when we can experience living in the flow and reach a higher understanding of what's available to us at any given time. In that way, we can build a life in which our present self can thank our past self for everything they've

done to help get them this far. Whenever you have time-bending experiences, write down the results in your book of shadows. You may want to refer to them in the future.

Space Witchery

Through much practice, witches can traverse time and space. Just like the trees that all drop their needles at the same time or the plants that communicate to each other via the underground mycelial network, we can tap into the oneness of it all or feel part of a singular being. Space witchery requires quiet surroundings and maintaining a theta trance state.

Cosmic Downloads

From time to time, two or more people have the same idea at the same time without any correspondence. Science, the creative arts, and literature are full of examples of people who were separated by entire continents and yet came to the same insight at the same time. The same thing happens with magical practitioners. Many ancient cultures believed that spirits are vessels for ideas and that they are floating in the ether, waiting to be worked with. This is how we intuitive witches know how to work with the world. We have a natural knowing, and we also can download volumes of ideas, information, and wisdom from the ethers in what's known as a *cosmic download*. Many of the insights in this book were directly intuited over the years I've been practicing. This kind of communication sharing and information downloading can happen to anyone naturally, through intuition or inspiration. It could also be channeled on purpose when we're connected and asking for it. The best way to obtain the information seems to do and act on intuition and to be open to receive it.

Mental Projection

Have you ever seen yourself through someone else's eyes? Empaths have the ability to tune in to this second sight, which is not quite astral projection. Rather, it's the projection of your mind into someone else's mind. I believe this ability is more common than most people think, especially for empaths who find their minds can't leave another's alone. This space witchery gets into the realm of being psychic, and it may be impossible for some people, but it can be

helpful. To mentally project your mind into another's, close your eyes and enter a theta trance state. Feel the weight and activity of the other person's body as they sit or move around. Hear the sounds they hear and try to get a sense of where they are and what they're doing. Finally, open your second sight and see what they see. The vision may be cloudy at first, or you might only be able to see a small amount of detail. Keep with it. When you are ready to return to your body, take a few quick breaths and envision yourself in your body. Raise your brainwaves to the beta level again. Ground your body.

This kind of magic gets into a gray area, so be aware of your ethics about potentially spying on someone before attempting this.

Flow On

Living in the flow is a special mindset. Once it's cultivated, it can be very addictive. Developing sequential flow moments is one of the end goals of intuitive witchcraft. It's worth it to put in the hard work physically, emotionally, and mentally to reach that state. However ephemeral it is, when we feel it, it's magical. It means we're connected with the world on a meaningful level. It means that all kinds of strange things like time witchery, omens, and energy flips can happen more organically. Flow moments are worth the time spent to create and sustain them. In some ways, it's the greatest magic of all.

Further Reading List

Grasse, Ray. *The Waking Dream: Unlocking the Symbolic Language of Our Lives*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1996.

Moss, Robert. *Sidewalk Oracles: Playing with Signs, Symbols, and Synchronicity in Everyday Life*. Novato, CA: New World Library, 2015.

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Chapter 13

Intuitive Witchcraft Communities

Imagine you could fly up above the enchanted forest. You'd see the world from a different perspective and see distant horizons that not many can see. With this distance, you could gain some objectivity about the nature of the world. Maybe you'd even see the curvature of the earth or different ecosystems. This chapter is about seeing the big picture, about stepping back from ourselves and seeing things from time frames that are large in scale.

We live in a vast world, with witches and nonwitches. All kinds of people coexist in this big world, with all sorts of beliefs and principles. Whether you're a solitary practitioner or if you're in a coven, you interact with many of these people. Who makes up your inner circle, and who is on the outside? Are you out of the broom closet, flying freely, or are you waiting for the right time to emerge? And how on earth can you live in a world that is frequently at odds with its ideal?

Magic doesn't exist in a vacuum, and neither do you. Everything we do affects our local environment, the world, and global consciousness. By finding our places in our communities, we can make positive changes that ripple out into the world. This chapter explores society, our connections, the world, and the imprints we leave on them.

Intuitive Witchcraft Covens, Circles, and Solitary Practitioners

Intuitive witchcraft is an open spirituality, and there's no need for initiation from a leader who has a lineage to practice it. It's something you can do by

yourself, with one or two friends, or with a larger group. Your group, if you have one, can be as personalized and unique as the group of people who are in it, with options for working with the gods, spirits, intuitive magics, astronomical events, or anything that your group desires. You can call your group a coven, a circle, or whatever best describes you. The best part about intuitive witchcraft is that you can get the spirituality you desire, whether that's on your own, or with others. You have the resources and tools to make the changes you desire. Have everyone brainstorm a vision statement and a few laws for the group. Record these in a community book of shadows along with a record of your rituals.

Intuitive witchcraft can also be used alongside other pagan and witchcraft traditions such as Wicca or Asatru. Whether the concepts of intuitive witchcraft are brought into those traditions, or if you practice intuitive witchcraft on your own, the two practices can feed each other and support positive spiritual growth.

Options for Witches in the Broom Closet

Some witches are proudly out of the broom closet. They're blazing paths, being seen, and normalizing paganism and witchcraft. We need those people to be part of our movement; however, not everyone is as confident or free as they are. Some people have a foot in each world and show a different aspect of themselves depending on whom they're surrounded by.

Some witches live their lives in the broom closet with the door triple locked and bolted. These people may not live in a safe environment or may not have the freedom to be their full witchy selves out in the open. It's always okay to be partially or fully in the broom closet.

For years, I wasn't out of the closet completely. There were times when I lived in unsafe places, where the mere act of walking through a grocery made people stop in their tracks and stare at me, as if they sensed how different I was. Other times, I was surrounded by judgmental people who treated me poorly because I was different. I wanted to be out of the broom closet, but enough drama was happening without me being "the witch at work" or "that pagan girl who won't convert to Christianity."

If you encounter people like this, it's okay to play it safe and be in the broom closet. Carry on with your life as if there were nothing for them to see. Normalize your energy and have medium-energy-level interactions with them. In the meantime, think long and hard about whether you want to stay in a place that restricts your freedom, with coworkers or friends whom you can't be out to, or if you want to move to a place or get a job where you can have more freedom of expression.

Of course, you could stay in the broom closet forever, practicing and keeping things a secret until your final breath, if you wish. But consider having one magical foot out to experience spiritual community. The cleverest way to accomplish a half-closeted life is to imagine you have concentric circles of friends and family, sort of like a target. The people inside the circles know your spirituality and celebrate your witchiness, while the people outside the circles don't know a thing about it.

The Inner Circle: The Flexible Coven

The inner circle contains the people who know you and your spirituality and also do magical or energy work with you. These could be the people in your coven, circle, spiritual group, people online, or just friends who share energy. They could be your best friends, lovers, and your good pagan or witch friends whom you know online but have never met personally. If you're lucky, you have a few family members here as well. These people would light a candle or send you healing energy if you asked for it. You feel safe enough with them to experience the full range of energy. They inspire you to celebrate the new moon and to honor your spirit. They'd be there to help you celebrate life's victories and also to mourn the loss of loved ones. They support you unconditionally and want what's best for you. You can talk about your experiences and dreams, and they'd never think poorly of you.

The friends in your inner circle are effectively acting as your coven, even if it isn't exactly established as so. I call this the "flexible coven" because they'd do anything for you and you share energy. With a flexible coven, people can be switched out depending on the energy you need to perform your work. It doesn't have a certain number of people, and you don't have to work with the same people every single time. These people will evolve along with you, but

they may also come and go over time. Go with the flow and trust your gut on who deserves to be this close to you.

The Outer Circle: General Friends

Your general friends are the people who are compatible and amiable and who respect your spiritual choices. You're out of the broom closet with them, but you don't practice together or do energy work with them. These people can be other witches and pagans or people who follow other religions, such as Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, atheists, or agnostics. They can be friends, online friends, and family. You can express yourself fairly freely to these people and share some of your higher and lower moments. Mostly, though, these relationships center around the middle energy frequencies to keep it simple and easy.

Outside the Circle: Everyone Else

Anyone who doesn't have your trust about your spirituality is outside the circle, and with them, you are in the broom closet. This group can include friends, coworkers, neighbors, and family. They either haven't earned your trust yet or they've broken your trust, or it's a medium-level relationship, such as them being your bankteller. They may be great people, but for whatever reason, you don't want to share who you are. I respect the decision of any pagan or witch to keep people at bay if their intuition tells them to do so.

With people outside the circle, limit your time, proximity, and depth of interactions, especially if they try to enter your outer circle. As the saying goes, good fences make good neighbors. Boundaries and medium-level energy are appropriate for interactions with them. If something doesn't feel right, refrain from interaction. It's not impolite to refuse to answer personal or spiritual questions. You are not Witchipedia, and you don't have to pander to someone who may have ulterior motives or an invalid concern about you.

However, if you feel a deeper connection with someone in this group, they can be allowed through the boundaries and into your outer circle. Follow your intuition about becoming closer with someone. When deciding whether or not to let someone in, evaluate your friendship energetically. Placing people in the various circles is an intuitive decision.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

Generational Witch Legacies

Jacki Smith

At a recent convention, a witch in her thirties came up to me and exclaimed, "I'm so excited to meet you! I grew up using your candles!" I was humbled and a bit taken aback. Am I that old? Yes, I am. I didn't track the passage of age, didn't realize that I moved from an acolyte to an elder.

It takes a wake-up call like that to fully internalize the impact of being a witch in the public eye for almost thirty years. I suddenly had a gut-level understanding that people of my generation are crafting the legacy for the next generation. My mind was also opened to see the magical legacy that my elders created, as they opened doors to make magical knowledge available at a mass level.

In my baby witch days, we still had to work and exist in secret. Finding a source of information was half the journey. Today, there is such an abundance of accessible information that it can be overwhelming. The beauty of this is that in most major cities, you can be open and freely practice your magic in public. This is the legacy that my generation of witches is leaving: the normalizing of magic and witchcraft. We may not be fully normalized yet, but we're not in fear of losing our jobs over a slip of the pentagram. We no longer must leave our daily life to practice our craft. We can bring our craft into our daily lives.

I love that today's young witches come into their magic more easily without having to redefine what a witch is with every conversation. I'm ecstatic that this generation gets a head start on magic and can find validation on the retail shelves of many stores who carry intentional products. With this new generation, intuition develops faster and deeper, and personal power and actualization are achieved decades earlier. I am enamored with how empowered the new witches are and anticipate what legacy they will leave as they become elders in their own right.

Use the information that other witches teach you as a jumping-off point. Remember that magic is born within you. Your spirit talks to you through imagination and intuition. Don't let it become weighed down by someone else's rules.

Magic thrives when you break rules and give your spirit the freedom to express itself. Have fun, get messy, and laugh—you are a witch, after all.

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Becoming a Mentor or Leader

Perhaps you'll choose to become someone in the magical community whom others can look up to. The community needs people to lead covens or circles, teach workshops, give rituals, write books, and share visions. If you've ever asked why someone hasn't done the right thing, the kind thing, or the helpful thing, you have an opportunity to become the solution. It means you have leadership skills. Because you noticed the need for it, you're more aware than most people. You could fix that lack so no one else has to feel that way. I've been blessed by having a few strong leaders and mentors in my life, and without them, I wouldn't be where I am today.

Your leadership doesn't have to look like examples of leadership from the past. You can use a different method to support your strengths and respect your boundaries. For example, the traditional method of defining leadership has been one person at the top of a pyramid who is "always on" and can give a public speech at a moment's notice. Your leadership may take the form of someone who is more of a midwife than a high-powered speaker: "While [other leaders] deposit knowledge in the learner's head, the midwives draw it out. They assist the students in giving birth to their own ideas, in making their own tacit knowledge explicit and elaborating it."[27] By communally assisting others with their moments of intuition and realization, you build stronger people in your community and also let others do some of the work. As an intuitive witchcraft leader, you could be "sometimes on." Other times you can take a break from leading or participating in rituals. If you're this kind of a leader, it's wise to acknowledge that you need down time to have spiritual revelations and to avoid burnout. Alternately, your coven or group could be composed of many leaders, or none at all, making everyone responsible for bringing something to offer.

Often, spiritual leaders work as pioneers, helping advance freedom of religion and equality. They assist pagans and witches who are in bad situations

27. Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997), 217.

and help those who are not yet out of the broom closet. Similarly, if you're comfortable in your own skin, simply being yourself around others can be a form of leadership.

In many ways, I believe we're the people we've been looking for. We have more strength and power to lead than we know, especially with shifting mindsets about the definition of a leader.

Leading a Scripted Intuitive Witchcraft Group Ritual

If you're good at creating your own rituals, it's likely you can lead a group ritual as well. Many people prefer to use scripted or prewritten rituals. They're especially common among people who like organization or people whose minds go blank when they're put on the spot. When it comes to leading a scripted ritual, preparation and practice are your friends. This section contains information about developing and leading a scripted ritual as well as a few tips and tricks to boost your confidence and get you into the right mindset.

Preparing the Scripted Ritual

- ★ Choose a theme or message for your ritual. You may also want to choose intentions or goals.
- ★ I recommend brainstorming to get the mental juices flowing, especially if you need to ground your nebulous notions into something more concrete. Brainstorm by first writing down your theme in the middle of a piece of paper. Think of anything that is associated with the theme and write those ideas down around the edges of the paper. Draw a line to connect the theme to each idea. It's likely that one idea will make you think of another association. Write down those next to the idea and connect them with a line. Keep going. Read books or articles online if you need extra inspiration. Soon, you will have clusters of ideas. Put stars by the best ideas that could be used in the ritual.
- ★ Take your starred ideas and think about how they could be used in the ritual. What order could they be placed in? Generally speaking, you want to gather people together on common ground, get them into a spiritual state, start the magical working, raise energy, release it, and ground. When you think you have a good idea of the flow of the ritual, write down the events in order on a separate piece of paper.

- ★ Write down additional details within each step. Unless you're giving this to advanced practitioners only, your concepts will need to be clear to the most beginner level present. It's a good idea to bring up all the life energies (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual) just to get everyone in the same initial mindset. Usually, this happens while casting a circle, but if not, you can use some other method. It's a great way to get everyone's energy on the same spiritual starting point.
- ★ Don't be afraid to ask for help. Delegate tedious responsibilities to assistants according to their gifts. For example, your lovely friend who always speaks quietly shouldn't call the quarters for a big ritual because their voice probably wouldn't be heard. However, they're the perfect person to greet or bless the participants. If your ritual will be in a public place such as a park, designate one or two people to deal with any harassers that present themselves. They can also watch over people in the ritual who have health concerns.
- ★ Transfer your steps and responsibilities onto index cards. Write the order number on one of the bottom corners, just in case you drop them.
- ★ Find out more details about your ritual space. What's permitted, and what's not allowed? How big is the space? Can you get a drawing of the space so you can plan where to set up an altar or where to place your assistants? How much time will you have?
- ★ Purchase or obtain all the materials needed for the ritual, as well as backups, just in case something happens. If you can help it, you wouldn't want to have to ask your group if they have a lighter. Handy backups include a spare candle, a lighter, incense, a glass hurricane candleholder or a lantern in case it's windy, and any other magical tools you use.

Preparing Yourself to Lead the Scripted Ritual

- ★ Practice the ritual by yourself a few times with all the tools and props. Find your voice. Use the power behind it.
- ★ You may want to create a charmed object to help you with whatever you need assistance with. This could be to have strength and confidence or to boost your oratory skills. It could be brought to the ritual and kept in a pocket, or if it's an adornment, it could be worn.

- ★ If you have helpers, do a quick run-through with them. If you're the only one leading it, practice it by leading the ritual with one or two friends from the flexible coven. Be aware of how your energy changes when you perform the ritual with other people in the room. When do you falter? Those are the parts you'll want to work on. Take notes about where you'll need more work and follow up with another run-through.
- ★ Practice getting in the right mindset to lead a ritual by using a magical practice to shift your energy. When I was a younger fire dancer, I used to pump myself up for big shows by listening to a certain fun, upbeat song. It always calmed my nerves and got me in the performance mindset. Experiment with different ways to get into the mindset to lead a ritual. You can listen to a special song, meditate and enter a light trance state, recite an invocation, inhale a special essential oil that you don't use for any other purpose, or anything that helps you to shift. Whenever you do this activity, feel your energy become the confident, spiritual leader. You can even use a title for yourself such as "priestess of dusk" or "earthen magician" to invoke the right feeling of your leadership.

Leading the Scripted Ritual

- ★ Show up early to the place the ritual will be held and set up. Be sure to bring everything you need, including your backup materials. Double check that you have everything before starting to socialize. Feel out the space and what unknowns may occur. For example, if you're performing a ritual in a room right next to a busy kitchen, you may hear noises of someone doing the dishes. Plan ahead, if possible. You could ask them to be quieter for the next thirty minutes. Double check with the owners or planners that whatever you're going to do in the ritual is okay. You don't want the owner of the building or the fire marshal telling you to extinguish your candles in the middle of a ritual. Use this time to prepare, move furniture, and cleanse the space.
- ★ When it's almost time to lead, get into the right headspace by listening to your music with headphones, using your essential oil, or doing whatever you do. If you feel nervous, channel the energy into excitement for what could happen. Breathe deeply and raise your vibration while remaining

grounded. When you feel saturated with a high amount of spiritual energy, it's time for the ritual to begin.

- ★ Release your expectations for a perfect ritual. Whatever happens is meant to be.
- ★ Begin the ritual by greeting everyone and getting them on the same frequency. Do so with words and your presence. Make eye contact to uplift the meek or to bring down the rowdy. You may want to walk around the group in a clockwise manner. Perform any needed energetic transformations on the group. The best leaders can take whatever group or crowd is assembled, gather everyone's energy in the same starting place, and transform their energy into something fresh.
- ★ Do your best. Don't be too hard on yourself if your voice quivers or your hands tremble. If you flub the lines, start again. If your energy falls, think back to your song or invocation and realign.
- ★ Channel the energy of the ritual through yourself and into the other participants. In many ways, you're the gatekeeper of the ritual and can facilitate experiences and energy. Let it flow through you. Use the energy ladder concept to take the energy of the participants and magnify it through the lens of spirit, deity, or any other method. Return it to them and feel the frequency rise.
- ★ If you forget something or drop your cards, keep going. If something unexpected happens that makes you flustered for longer than a second, acknowledge it and go with the flow. For example, if the wind keeps blowing out the candle, it's okay to point it out. You could say something like, "Wow, it's really windy tonight. Good job, whoever called in air!" This breaks the tension, and laughter is a great way to raise energy. Of course, this may not be appropriate for a solemn ritual such as a funeral rite.
- ★ Be sure to ground after the ritual with rest, food, and water.

It takes time to master the skill of leading a ritual, as is the case with many abilities. The only way to learn it is to do it. Keep leading rituals and learning.

Leading a Spontaneous Intuitive Witchcraft Ritual

Although most people use only scripted formats for rituals, it's possible to use intuitive witchcraft in your ritual as well. This could take the form of an entirely spontaneous ritual or parts that are intuitively led within a scripted ritual. For many people, the ability to be spontaneous in a ritual becomes easier after successes with the scripted rituals; however, this may be other people's preferred method.

To lead a spontaneous intuitive witchcraft ritual, be in the moment and truly feel out the energy of a group or crowd. Let their energy inform the direction of the ritual and what you speak. Reading the energy of the room can serve to bring out what's needed the most, as opposed to what has been planned. This skill helps immensely when the conditions are off. For example, if it's already raining, you don't need the prescheduled ritual to make it rain. You need another ritual, pronto, for the people who still showed up. Or if the person who was supposed to lead the ritual can't be found, you could step up and lead the ritual, winging it entirely.

Ad-libbing within a ritual is another one of those great intuitive practices. If you want to try this, be honest. Speak from your heart. Talk for the group and yourself. Don't be afraid to make a joke if the ritual isn't too solemn.

Once, I was leading a light-hearted workshop with a group of women on a spiritual retreat, but my intuition told me that something was wrong. The energy was off. They seemed distracted and tense. I suggested we change topics and perform a book divination, which everyone agreed to. I opened a book and started reading. Much to my surprise, it was a passage about death. The energy shifted. Some of the women gave each other meaningful looks. I waited for them to explain, holding the emotional space for whatever was about to come up. After a couple of seconds, a woman revealed that someone in their group had just received news that a family member had passed away unexpectedly. Everyone was shocked and grief-stricken for her. The group obviously needed to process the energy, and the book divination gave them the perfect opportunity to do so. I shifted gears and talked about my experiences with death, and then I invited everyone to share their own experiences. Soon, everyone had shared something, and the energy felt more relaxed. It was exactly what the group needed in that time and place. We ended with a group meditation.

If you feel that a group needs something different from what you're giving it, go with the flow. Change and open up to the possibilities. Hold space for deep emotions, if need be. Let others release. Look for anyone who seems to be an early responder to what's coming out. If you see this happening, take your time with a profound moment. Often, these people act as bellwethers, with tears or joy that opens the path for others to express their feelings. Elevate the emotions of this person to raise collective energy in the group.

When the energy starts to fizzle out, tie up any loose ends and bring the energy back down. Invite everyone to ground through meditation, an expression of gratitude, a moment of silence, a group hug (if that's appropriate), releasing excess energy to the earth, opening the circle, or anything else that feels right. When we follow our gut while leading rituals, we can give people more of what they need energetically. We can act as figureheads for something greater and allow it to come through us. The regular rules of consent apply, but other than that, there are many options we can use to deepen a ritual and make it a more effective experience for everyone involved.

Other Ways to Use Spontaneous Intuitive Witchcraft in Group Ritual

Here are a few other ways to use intuitive witchcraft in group rituals. These ideas involve the group doing the intuitive work or choosing to partake in the ritual at a higher level.

- ★ You can use the group to help perform some of the work. Pass out index cards to whomever seems to be a good fit. This way, different people can call the directions, cast the circle, or invoke a deity. They can use their intuitions about what to say, or they can read from the card.
- ★ Ask the participants to create their own charm bag or spell jar. Each participant could choose from among several different types of fabric, herbs, stones, and oils you provide. This empowers each person to use their intuition and make the product more unique to them.
- ★ Let each person choose a card from a tarot deck or other symbolic deck. This can be their personal theme for the ritual.
- ★ The group could make something together spontaneously as part of the ritual, such as a song, a work of art, a dance, or any combination of them.

- ★ Each person could be told the theme of the ritual so that they can bring a personal correspondence. This item will be combined with other people's correspondences to make something together. This final product would be more than the sum of its parts. After raising energy together, you'd divide the mixture, and everyone would get a little bit of the magic to take home.
- ★ You could let one person in the group speak for a moment and guide the direction of the ritual. This could be on behalf of the spirit of the season, a deity, a spirit, or anything else you want to bring forth. If you do this, let the group know before the ritual that you'll intuitively choose someone to speak. People could give you a sign if they're not interested in speaking, in which case you'd choose another person. Whatever the person says should be accepted and taken forward into the ritual.
- ★ You could offer a more intense step—a ritual within a ritual. If participants feel called to complete this step, give them something more. You could give people a special blessing, a message from your intuition, or use a divination tool such as tarot. Give them a higher-energy ritual or let them choose what they will receive.

The Greater Pagan and Witch Community

Even lone wolves get the blues. I advise you to resist the urge to be entirely solitary. Seek a magical community somewhere—search for people who are kind and feel like home. True friendship means being supported for our paths, trusting in one another's intuition, and lifting each other up with unconditional love. In this magical modern age, we can meet these people anywhere, even the internet or possibly at a pagan gathering. Look for genuine laughter, higher spiritual energy, and people being there in the good times as well as the bad. Those are signs of a true community.

The value in community may not be evident when you first meet people, but when life becomes rougher, it can be more apparent. When Hurricane Katrina displaced my friends who ran the Voudou Temple, the community rushed in to assist. Instantly, a local pagan community organized to give them a free place to stay as well as boxes of clothing, books, magical items, kitchenware, gift cards, food, and much more.

When bad situations happen, we can reach out to each other and share support, money, energy, a memory, or a thought. Those can make a huge difference. With a tight-knit pagan community, good things are possible because the majority of us are good people and we look out for each other. There is indeed strength in community.

Pagan and Witch Gatherings and Festivals

Imagine a hotel or a campground where everyone is a witch or a pagan. Now, picture yourself flipping through a schedule of enchanting speakers, workshops, and rituals. Should you go to the Ritual for Self-Love with Aphrodite or the Calling Down the Moon Wiccan Ritual? Should you go to the workshop called Being an Empath or the Witch's Aromatherapy? Should you hit up the vendors or relax alone with a good book?

At pagan gatherings and festivals, you'll find the greatest pagan and witch minds of our time giving lectures, signing books, and answering questions. You can meet other interesting people similar to you, who practice their own forms of witchcraft and paganism. You'll probably hear pagan music at a gathering too. If you go to an outdoor festival, you can dance around a crackling bonfire to the beat of several drummers as they play under the stars. You could even stay up all night and howl at the dawning sun on summer solstice. If you go to an indoor festival, you can rest in climate-controlled comfort and are almost guaranteed a hot shower every day.

Pagan gatherings are my favorite vacations. The decompression and freedom I feel at them is exponentially greater than any other vacation I've ever had. If you're feeling shy about going, try going to a pagan gathering at a hotel first. Before deciding whether to go, converse with people who've gone to the event before and ask them what they liked about it and what they disliked. Ask a friend to go with you to reduce the pressure to make new friends right away. If you feel shy, retreat to the tent or room and take some alone time.

Going to a pagan gathering isn't for everyone, but you might just find your place in the community, like many before you have. The amount of information you could learn and the experiences you could have are simply astounding. However, just like magic, you get back what you put into it. If you hide yourself away the whole time, you'll be missing out.

Online Witch and Pagan Groups

There are countless online groups where you can find great community and inspiration. All kinds of good people from all over the world are online and want to share in an intentional community. These people may offer a laugh, sympathy, healing energy, camaraderie, insight, and impetus to do the spiritual work. Their posts can range from all kinds of things, from the mundane to the advanced works. There are a few sites in particular that feed my spirit so much. If you're a solitary witch, I hope you have a few of those as well. These people put a lot of work into providing good content and policing the site. People who are in the broom closet can choose to join closed groups, for privacy. They could also choose to not like a public witchy page or join a public group but bookmark it so they can still read the materials.

I was surprised by the immense amount of support and healing that was available to me from my online pagan and witch friends when I was dealing with a tragic loss in my family. Several people reached out and offered to send energy, prayers, support, and love. People lit candles on their altars for my family and stayed by my side energetically, even though we'd never met in person. They performed reiki on me at no cost whatsoever. It made healing from the loss much easier. Months later, I can say that it definitely made our friendship grow deeper.

Of course, there are trolls on the internet who delight in creating problems and knocking others down. Like any wise spider knows, the web is only as strong as what you're connected to. In other words, block trolls and leave nasty groups. Go to a different witchy group. Just as you would look for friends in real life that are kind and supportive, seek those people online. It's likely that you'll find spiritual nourishment among others with discernment and time.

Seeking Outside Magical Help

If you're feeling stuck, cursed, or down and you've tried everything you know of to fix the situation, including therapy and medical solutions, why not go to the magical community for help? If you need insight or assistance, there are several people who can assist you, and they're usually only a few clicks away. Consult with a psychic or someone who can perform divination, such as a tarot reader. Or you could seek a healer—there are several kinds, including reiki

masters, shamans, intuitive healers, massage therapists, and more. You could work with a pagan life coach or a witch mentor.

Ask your friends if they recommend anyone in particular, or check out the presences of people offering services online. Most established people have a Facebook page or a website where you can read testimonials and see what services they offer. If someone's active as a leader or writer in the pagan or witch community, it's likely that they've studied a lot and could be helpful. If you can't afford to pay for the service, offer to trade time for time or barter items you own or make. There's no shame in asking for assistance from others. Sometimes, we just need someone else to shed a little light on the problem for us to see it for what it really is.

Finding Solutions to Community Problems

Pagan and witchcraft communities have problems, just like the rest of the world. Covens and circles lose members and fall apart all the time. I've been a part of many circles that disbanded after a leader moved or when the leadership turned sour. In times like these, it's good to remember that change is the only constant in the world. Maybe your path isn't to stay with the same coven for twenty years. Maybe you'll have a deeper experience with one other friend compared to a group of twelve. If you like the group, keep going. If not, find something else. Leaders are born from moments of crisis, when there was no one else to lead. Even if you don't lead, there are countless pagan and witchcraft groups. You may have to drive an hour to go to one, but it could recharge your battery for weeks.

Everyone makes mistakes, even people in your circle or coven. If none of the circle laws have been broken, you might be able to correct a bad situation with a gentle confrontation and a request to stop the offensive behavior. If it's a bit more serious, have a few witnesses and a private confrontation. The leaders may want to give them the option to conform to the group or leave of their own free will.

However, there may also be someone in a circle who turns out to be a bad person. This person could be a sociopath, an energy vampire, or any number of other problematic things. It can be easy to theorize about what to do, but when faced with a real problem, things can become complicated. Often, a leader needs to step up and take charge of a bad situation. If any of the group

laws have been broken, the person should face the possibility of suspension or even exile, depending on the matter. If state or federal laws have been broken, you may need to get the police involved to act as a higher level of authority. This is often the right thing to do to ensure that consequences for the offensive behavior follow the person wherever they go.

It's wise to face problems head-on. Groups who ignore problems will create strife among the members and will fall and burn eventually. Leaders who knew about the problems and did nothing will be blamed almost as harshly as the transgressors. Keep the peace of the many by dealing with the one who is the problem. If community falls apart, let it. Something greater might rise from the ashes. Allow your community to be an ebb and flow, and go with whatever feels good.

RITUAL TO HONOR MAGICAL COMMUNITY

THE CAULDRON OF COMMUNITY

This ritual can be performed by yourself or with a group. The intention is to honor the group and each member. The goal is to awaken the sense of community, friendship, and trust within a circle of friends or a community. If there are many people, delegate tasks. If it's just you, imagine your community and what you want it to be.

On a new moon, cast a circle. For each quarter, call upon an element of your magical community, such as intelligence for east/air, creativity for south/fire, trust for west/water, and purpose for north/earth. Be creative and make it individual to your group.

Have someone who is optimistic by nature pour water into a large bowl or cauldron. Ideally, this will be water charged by the moon and from a natural source, such as a spring, a stream, or the ocean. For example, "I pour the waters of life that represent all the emotions we experience together. I now proclaim this the cauldron of community."

Next, each person approaches the cauldron with something to add to it that represents the ideals of the community, such as oils, herbs, leaves, dirt, symbols, and crystals. With each item, the person states their personal intentions that relate to the group goal. They state how they'll interact with the magical community. For example, "To the cauldron of community, I add soil from my home, where we meet to have

intuitive circle every Sunday. May I keep my energy and the energy of my home good in order to provide a safe place for people to learn, grow, be themselves, and trust in each other." Or, "To the cauldron of community, I give amethyst chips, so that we may be conscientious, spiritual, and sober. I wish to support all members and be a friend if they need one." After each person speaks, everyone says, "May it be so."

After everyone has gifted something to the cauldron and spoken their intentions, everyone steps back into a circle. One of the leaders says, "The cauldron of community holds our emotions and will together, but it also represents boundaries. It holds out what we don't want and keeps in what we desire. Each of us always has the right to decline any energetic exchange for any reason whatsoever. Anyone who does not follow our rules will be asked to leave the group."

Read the tenets or rules of the group and ask everyone if they agree to them. Everyone should say yes or be asked to leave. "With our agreement, we stand as individuals, here of our own free will. Each of you are unique and offer special gifts to the community. Feel your own energy, individually. Feel it rise within you, climbing into a higher frequency of spiritual energy. Magnify it. When you're ready, take a step forward, toward the cauldron of community. With this closer circle, feel the energy of your community. Join your energy together."

The leader should stir the cauldron at this point. "With a wand made of oak, a symbol of strength, I combine our energies together. Our strengths are shared. Visualize yourself and our community, each getting what you desire from the other. See a perfect energetic exchange that helps you and the group. Feel the support of the group and the unconditional love. Hold this visualization in your mind." (An oak wand was used as an example, but another material can be used. Simply exchange the material and the meaning.)

You may wish to have someone scry on the surface of the water to get a vision of the future. Before closing, have everyone bless the cauldron with their raised energy. At this point, the cauldron liquid can be bottled and given to people who were in the ritual as a token of remembrance. Or, if only safe items are used, you could keep the cauldron "brewing" until the full moon, then dump it outside the home to act

as a place of remembrance and offering to the nature spirits. Be sure to retain special things like crystals, which now act as community crystals that are connected to the group will. Consider creating a community altar with the larger crystals, bottles, cauldron, and anything else.

The Wide World

It's important to get out into the world and connect with it. Make friends who are worthy of your beautiful soul. Consider being the leader you wished were present when you were younger. You and your magic can change the world for the better. Even the smallest intuitive actions can create huge ripples.

Further Reading List

Brown, Brené. *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.* New York: Random House, 2018.

Linde, Nels, and Judy Linde. *Taking Sacred Back: The Complete Guide to Designing and Sharing Group Ritual.* Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2016.

ThreeFeathers, Lillith, and Joy Marie Wedmedyk. *Heart of the Elder: Good Elders and Their Influences.* Stafford, UK: Megalithica Books, 2018.

Chapter 14

The Ever-Evolving Practice

Contrary to what some people may have thought, your interest in witchcraft and paganism wasn't "just a phase." Or if it was, it was like a moon phase, and it only grew toward fullness. Like the moon, there will be changes and evolutions in your practice. This is a good thing. Through setting your own pace, learning, and becoming adept, you'll be able to challenge yourself when you feel ready and on your own terms. That's one of the many reasons why I love intuitive witchcraft—it combines growth at a sustainable pace with absolute freedom to choose what's best for you.

Many people are afraid to grow older, but with every passing year, I feel that life just keeps getting better. Despite some hardships, losses, and the natural downsides of aging, I know who I am more, I'm better able to make effective changes in my life, and I feel closer to the mysteries. My craft has changed over the years, and it's all for the better. It makes sense for a practice to evolve, considering that everything changes—change is the nature of the universe. Our lives and the earth are constantly evolving. Going with the flow and embracing these natural changes helps us embody our most powerful selves.

Most of us will continue to walk along our intuitive witchcraft paths until the ends of our lives. Growing older with witchcraft and paganism is a natural continuation of your lifestyle, and one that will feed your soul even beyond your last breath. For that reason, this chapter is dedicated to exploring the transformations you may see in your practice.

Ways Your Practice May Change

Personal Deities

The deities that you adore today might just lose their prominent placement on your altars. This will be especially true of the gods with whom you have limited communication, but it's just as possible that your main deities could change as well.

The first goddesses I was attracted to were Artemis, Cerridwen, and Brigid. Part of my early practice included singing their names to weave my consciousness into a trance with their gentle, powerful presences. They helped me in my formative years by showing me the way and by guiding my young, faltering steps. I'll always love them for helping me become more empowered and for inspiring my true self to shine through. I don't recall the exact moment when they were no longer my go-to goddesses. Over time, I experienced several turbulent changes in my life; at one point, I moved eight times in one year. During one of those moves, my altar items dedicated to those goddesses simply didn't come out of a box. Instead, I set up altars with new objects for other goddesses and gods who had started to call to me. These new deities resonated better with the lessons I wanted to learn and the person I was becoming.

Artemis, Cerridwen, and Brigid will always hold a very special place in my heart. I know I can return to them in the future if I desire. For now, my path has taken me far away—farther than I ever imagined. I have new spiritual work and a different energy. It makes sense that I work with new deities.

If you feel a shift happening with your gods, don't be afraid of change. Move in the direction your intuition is guiding you toward. You can always go back if need be.

Spirit Allies

Many years ago, I had a powerful experience with a spirit guide. He guided me for quite some time, but at one point, he mostly moved on. When I call upon him in rituals, he may or may not attend. His energy feels weaker to me, and he's not as present in my life as he used to be.

Some spirits, such as our ancestors, will be with us always. Others will be with us only for a lesson or a certain stage of our lives. It doesn't mean that they love us any less, only that they had a function and a role, just as we did. New guides will likely come, especially if you look for them. I have a new spirit

guide now, and it's working out great. She has many insights to share with me, and I'm looking forward to reaching new horizons with her.

Knowledge and Abilities

The more you practice, the more your knowledge and abilities will grow. Your ability to draw energy will also grow, as will your power to cast energetic circles and hold a meaningful ritual. Your psychic and empathic abilities will deepen, and you'll enter the flow state easier. Your knowledge of spells and herbs will become stronger and more intuitive. Your inner magic and intuition will grow in strength the more you practice. You may even rely less often on external items, such as stones, herbs, and other correspondences, and more on your own willpower and strength.

New Challenges

Manifestation is split into two cycles: planting and harvest. We ask for challenges, then when they're presented to us, we accept them and get to work. Eventually, we master the challenge or decide we want a new one, and in the process, attain more knowledge and abilities. Then, we want a new challenge. These two activities feed each other. If you're in the habit of creating challenges and mastering them, your rituals will fall into a fast pattern. Manifestation will become easier and much faster.

Without a doubt, we'll inevitably encounter new challenges that ask us to do our hardest work yet. These push our boundaries and ask us if we really want to step up our game. They remind me of the phrase "be careful what you ask for—you might just get it." If you accept the challenge, it's likely that you'll have to utilize a higher aspect of yourself. It'll also probably require more grounding, perception, and emotional stability. Does this sound like something you're ready for?

New challenges can accelerate our spiritual evolution at a great rate. It's up to you to decide how much to take on and when you need a break. Use your intuition to know when to pause your manifestator. Try to work at your own pace to contribute to the challenges in a sustainable manner to your lifestyle.

Spiritual Goals

Think about the first goals you set when you started practicing witchcraft and your goals now. Unless you're very new to witchcraft, your goals have probably

changed. When I first started practicing, I wanted to get to know myself and what my strengths were. After several years, my goals have changed. Now, I want to be the best person I can be, to live in the flow whenever possible, and also to inspire others spiritually. It's natural for our desires to shift every few months, years, or decades.

Take a moment to ask yourself how spiritual you'd like to be in your daily life. Envision a spectrum: on one side is the armchair witch who likes to think about witchcraft but is not willing to work on their craft with practice or rituals. On the other end is someone who walks their path every single day even on the hardest of days, lives in the flow state more often, and is able to build more of the life they want because of their relationship with magic and energy. Where do you fall on the spectrum? Are you spiritual only at big gatherings, where someone else leads the ritual? Are you happy with your level of interaction with the otherworld and spirits? In other words, is what you're doing enough for you?

There are no wrong answers to these questions. At different times of our lives, we need different things. Your intuition will help you determine how deep you want to travel in the enchanted forest. If you keep hearing the call to go deeper, keep walking. If you need to rest, rest. Continue to challenge yourself and develop new spiritual goals that feed you in accordance with what you need.

Power

What have you always wanted to do? Having personal power can enable you to do more with your life and accomplish your goals. The more you practice, the more you'll be able to claim your power and take charge of situations. You'll be able to express yourself better, and feelings of victimization will begin to fade, if not disappear entirely.

You may even enter a position of power among other people, whether in a coven, at work, at a book group, at a pagan event, or online. Use your power to encourage fairness and equality, to lift up the voices of the few, and to help the community evolve. You can also use it to develop your own unique vision and share your methods with others. Leading group rituals and mentoring others is an invaluable talent.

Personal Symbols

Just like clothing fashions, it's possible we can outgrow certain pagan styles. When I first became a pagan, the pentacle was everywhere. Everyone I knew had one, and I thought I needed one too. I bought a pentacle necklace but rarely wore it, and I never used the pentacle in my magic at all. After a few years, I realized that I never identified with the symbol. Although it was beautiful, it seemed to represent other people more than it represented me. However, I did relate to the moon. It seemed to be more of my flavor of spirituality because it represents my goddess worship, my moon rituals, and my transformations. I gifted the pentacle necklace to someone else, and now, I wear a moon necklace as my personal symbol.

Maybe you'll keep the same powerful symbols and sigils for the rest of your witchy life, or maybe you'll want new symbols to represent the changes you've gone through. If your symbols change over the years, be open to it. Go with the flow and experiment. Question the things you took for granted when you first started down this spiritual path. These questions can open your mind and bring about a greater sense of who you really are, and that's what it's all about.

True Wisdom

Some people who work with esoteric knowledge can become wiser. They reach a more elevated state when it comes to physical, emotional, and mental problems and can transcend much of the drama of everyday life. When this happens, fewer mistakes are made, and life can be lived more "on purpose" as opposed to reactionary. People have fewer regrets when they act from a more spiritual and wiser place. Wisdom is gained over time. It certainly doesn't happen overnight. It's the culmination of following one's intuition for years and many steps in the right direction. Think back to your life two years ago. Are you wiser now than you were then? What steps can you take to move into a wiser lifestyle?

Vessels for Spirit

As we grow into our paths with our gods and spirits, we become vessels for their knowledge and their ways. We take on their passions and energies. In some ways, we start to become those we work with and worship. Their will may become our will. Our lives may even resemble theirs.

Practice and Rituals

Your intuitive morning practice that feeds your soul now might not stick around when life changes, and that's okay. Events like having a baby or being an emergency responder mean we may not have time to pull tarot cards before we start our days. Go with the flow, and shift with the changes. Follow your intuition to find what you need. Find space wherever you can. For example, you could use the time spent rocking a baby to sleep or driving to work for spiritual practice.

Hermit Time

There will be times when we want to be social and participate in the energy all around us, but there will also be times when we need to unplug and focus on our own bodies, brains, energies, and spirits. As you grow into your practice, you may find that, from time to time, you need to be a hermit. Whether that's for a few hours, a day, a few days, or longer, taking those moments can recharge us and can help us see the world and our lives more objectively. Hermit time lets us listen to our internal voices, especially if they've gone quiet. When I truly want to listen to myself, I unplug from socializing in person, email, texting, and social media. I spend time alone with long moments of silence. It clears my mind, body, and spirit, which is especially important for empaths and other sensitive people. Sometimes, time alone can make me feel less stuck and can even bring on a flow moment.

Life is a balancing act. It's composed of the outside world and your internal world. Maybe your ideal ratio between the two is fifty-fifty, or maybe it's closer to seventy-thirty or twenty-eighty. Find a ratio that works for you and evaluate it often, as your needs can change. What's relevant now may be reflective of your current growth cycle and not the next one or the one before.

Collecting Cobwebs

There may be a time when you need to put your craft on the shelf. Life can get so busy, especially if you're a caregiver. You may have to make time for more pressing needs. That's fine. Take a break from practice and ritual anytime your intuition tells you to do so. Rest and take care of yourself and your needs. There's no need to feel guilty for taking a break from your practice. When you

want to walk in the enchanted forest again, your intuition will be there. You can pick up where you left off—just brush off the cobwebs and start again.

However, consider the possibility that those overwhelming times may be when we need our craft the most. Slip in a ritual here and a practice there, if possible. Find some way of celebrating the spiritual.

Evaluate how it feels to spend time away from your practice. Does the break help you, or do you miss the spiritual life? How does it feel to step back into the wild woods again for a ritual?

Greater Sense of True Self

As you get older, you'll become more comfortable and confident with your unique energy. Inner and outer dramas will fall away more easily and will be replaced with a greater sense of comfort in one's own skin.

Of course, it's possible you'll make waves just by being yourself. Great minds always do. Small-minded people will always gossip, and mudslingers will always find a new target. However, with a greater sense of your true self, if they center on you, their energy won't be able to tear you down as much, if at all. That's because you've found a greater happiness from within. People will be able to see it in you. Your easy sense of self will radiate out, making it easier for you to find new friends and lovers who are on your wavelength. Let your light shine and be yourself. Allow your true self to emerge. Own your power.

Metamorphosing

We are not static creatures. We have different experiences every day, and they make up who we are. Our roles and relationships aren't permanent. Our environments are ever changing. The longer you follow your own spiritual path, the more you'll make changes in your life that will support who you are in the present moment. Like the phoenix, we burn away our old sense of selves and start anew again and again. We learn and grow. Parts of us fade away.

Your inner and outer circles will change as well. People will come and go. Be mutable. Grow in the directions that feed your soul. Have many roles, relationships, and lives, and let them change. Try to keep having new experiences until your final days. Trust in your path. Allow changes to wash over you and renew you.

Legacy

We've all heard the call of the intuition and heeded it for our own sakes. We've bettered ourselves and nurtured our dreams. But what is your calling in regard to the next generation? What role do you play in the world? How will you be remembered by your community? If you haven't thought about this yet, consider what your life message would be to others. Would other people see it the same way you see it? What seeds can you plant now and in the future to bring your ideal concept into being?

Making Peace with Death

As we get older and have more and more mystical experiences, we may have some realizations about death. Our work helps us understand that there's more to this world than meets the eye, especially if we work with spirits and the gods. While death is certainly the end of one era, it may just be the start of something new and completely different.

Planning your own funeral or remembrance ritual is a wonderful way to make peace with your own inevitable death. Leaving a will and testament with a lawyer can give you more peace of mind when you pass. Do you prefer to be buried in a pagan cemetery, a green cemetery, or alongside family? Do you prefer to be cremated? What music would you want to have playing? Who should lead the remembrance ritual—a coven mate or leader? Who should make speeches? Will you leave money to a charity? How will your possessions be divided? If those documents aren't in place, a pagan or witch funeral may not be possible due to the people in charge at the time of your death. You can at least make your preferences known. Share this information with a few of your inner circle friends. They can respect your wishes even if other people are in charge, even if they must have their own ceremony to help you be remembered in the way you wish. Write out the important parts of your ritual, including location, preferred season or date of the ceremony (if applicable), which deities should be named, what offerings should be made, what photo to use, and so on.

Making peace with death is a lifelong dance, with complicated steps and ever-changing music. If near-death experiences have anything to teach us, it's that the otherworld is teeming with possibility, love, spirituality, and pure joy.

Learning

Read as much as you can. Keep learning. Go to gatherings and attend rituals and workshops. See speakers talk about all kinds of topics. Experiment with your magic to grow in depth as well as breadth. Learning is one of the best ways to grow and to ensure your energy won't become stagnant.

Rites of Passage

It's important to celebrate the big milestones in our lives. Rites of passage can be for anything, including graduating from school, writing a novel, finishing a project, having a child (or a grandchild or a great-grandchild), becoming an elder (or crone or mage), getting married, getting separated or divorced, getting a new job, retiring, or stopping an addictive behavior. Having a rite of passage is an extremely gratifying experience that can help you mark your present place on the path. It denotes the forest behind you, the paths you took, and where you came from. It also represents the vast magical woods before you.

Your rite of passage can be a private ceremony if you wish. If so, celebrate in a place that's sacred to you and do something magical to help you mark the change. The rite may also be a form of public recognition, such as a big ritual or a party. You could even get outside assistance from someone who can help with a big ritual. After all, you've probably done enough work.

Whatever you do, celebrate your achievement and honor the work you put in. You deserve to bask in your glory.

Reframing the Past

With time and wisdom, you can look back at your life and the journey you traveled. Where you are now? What have you overcome? What's the higher story that threads it all together? Thinking about your past and reframing it so that it makes more sense can make seemingly random moments more cohesive. Looking at our lives as purposeful paths helps us understand how we got to this place and gives us the opportunity to take back our stories. We can see what happened when we acted in accordance with our intuition and when we acted against it. Through that, we can find greater meaning and insight.

Life is not a meaningless string of events. Embrace any past imperfections. Accept your best attempts and move on. The challenges and hardships we overcame aided us into the stronger people we became. By reframing our pasts

to highlight our growth, we free ourselves from old baggage. This can help us be in the moment more readily, feel the high moments of our current-day lives, and also think about the future.

EXERCISE

SPIRITUAL GOALS

Think about your current spiritual goals. If it feels appropriate, talk about them with your gods or spirits in your next ritual and ask for assistance in accomplishing them.

EXERCISE

HOW MUCH HERMIT TIME DO YOU NEED?

What's your perfect ratio for external energy and internal energy? Do you prefer to go out and see friends every moment of free time you have? If so, your ratio of external energy to internal energy needs is close to one hundred to zero. Do you need every other day off from socializing? Your ratio is closer to fifty-fifty. If you only like to socialize one night a week, your ratio might be around fifteen–eighty-five. What is your perfect ratio to keep your energy flowing smoothly? Follow this ratio and see if it works. Come back to this in a week and evaluate if you feel it works, or if it needs to be adjusted. Reevaluate it a couple of times a year, especially after any major life changes.

INTUITIVE INSIGHTS

On Becoming a Pagan Elder, Crone, Mage, or Senior

Penny Goody

An open letter to you, gentle reader:

We have not spoken for a while, and yet I have heard your many questions and concerns. How have you been during these interesting times? Still looking for answers, I see—reading, researching, and discovering new questions that come with new understanding. You are a seeker on a long-lived magical quest. Your journey stretches out before and behind you. Your past trailblazing adventures are now connecting at this spot, at this time, with countless paths

continuing ahead. This magical "path" you follow is like a spiral, curving and circling around and around. The Wheel of the Year is ever turning, revisiting points on the calendar. It is spinning onward, upward, returning to the solstice and the equinox only to see it is the same time of the year, but not the same place in time. Pay attention to these cycles! The moon brings daily ocean cycles dancing around the earth. Make note of the seven-year cycles of Saturn and of course the return of Saturn in your unique astrological chart. It takes the planet almost 29.4 years to lap the sun. Often referred to as Father Time, Saturn's role is as a taskmaster. The years of the first Saturn return are most adults' productive times. With the second return around 58 to 60 years of age, a person becomes a *senior*.

The title of *elder* is a way to understand commitments. This title carries with it the obligation of study. It cannot be self-appointed but rather bestowed by the community who recognizes someone as a valued member living a magical life. This person may be an organizer, clergy, or educator in service to others. We honor our elders for their work. An elder does not have to be a senior, though.

The titles of *crone*, *sage*, or *wise one* should be attained after Saturn's second return. The senior can actively participate in a focused study for a year and a day toward their title. The shapeshifting trial of "becoming" can only be endured by the sheer resilience gotten by living all those years.

• • •

Everything Changes

I hope this chapter reveals how growing older with your intuition is a satisfying path. Change is inevitable. With time, we will grow, whether we want to or not. You can view this growth as if you're losing youth or as if you're gaining wisdom. I like to think that with every silver or white strand of hair that appears on my head, I'm embodying the magical energy of the moon even more.

Conclusion

Reaching for the Stars

You've trekked through the enchanted forest, felt the full moon shine upon your face, divined the truth, encountered a deity, laughed with a faery, walked along the ink-black lake, and embraced your shadow. You've felt a flow moment, experienced community, and maybe even floated just outside of your body. You've finally arrived at your final destination—a rocky mountaintop. A canopy of bright stars twinkles above you, so close that you can almost touch them and so dazzling that you want to stare at them forever.

From this distance, you can see everything—the entirety of the paths you chose, the paths you didn't choose, the peaks and valleys you traversed, the areas of perpetual night, and the places where you stood in your power. It may have been a tough journey at times, but now you're tempered, like fine metal. You know your own energy and can read the energy of your surroundings. You have the ability to change what you don't want, or at least change how you feel about it. You know more about the mysteries of life and what lies beyond. Moreover, you know who you are and your value. You know that you have immeasurable strength and that your soul is as limitless as the starry cosmos.

This is the end of your journey in this book, but like a dark moon, it's also just the beginning. Your intuitive path will continue throughout the rest of your life. It's a personal adventure that's unique to you.

Your bravery has gotten you this far. Where will you go from here? The most advanced witchcraft you'll ever do is the path you forge ahead. What new paths will you take? What forests will you revisit? Will you tread the wide path

of pagan traditions, or will you continue to wander through the enchanted forest? Maybe a little of both? As long as you're true to yourself and your intuition, you'll always be in the right place at the right time.

Thank you for taking this journey with me. I wish you many blessings and a truly magnificent life.

Sincerely,

Astrea

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Glossary

absorptive weather magic: taking energy from the weather to use for magical practices

alchemization: a type of energy flip wherein you use the force of someone's negative energy directed at you in the opposite manner than was intended

alignment: the action of making one's energies more balanced, or the act of changing one's energy to have one's chakras be actively spinning and in their proper places along the spine, neck, and skull

alpha brainwaves: slower-/lower-frequency brainwaves compared to beta brainwaves; useful for light meditation and trance states

altar: place for sacred objects; its items can be changed out with the seasons or with the needs of the ritual

ancestral spirits: the spirits of your ancestors and nondirect-lineage family members who work with you

astral projection: out-of-body experience, or the separation of the spirit from the body

athame: a double-sided knife used in casting a circle

atmosphere: your personal frequency of energy when you feel the most free and relaxed

aura: electromagnetic field around any living beings

banish: to forcibly remove physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual influence

baneful magic: magic performed with the intent to harm another

Beltane: one of the Irish fire festivals, adapted to be included in the Wheel of the Year sabbats, celebrated around May 1 to 5 in North America

beta brainwaves: regular, everyday brainwaves that assist with functioning

book of shadows: magical journal and record of rituals and magic

broom closet: used in the phrase "in the broom closet," which describes a witch or pagan who is not openly a witch or pagan or who is out to some people but not to everyone

cauldron: a container, usually metal, that can be used to mix correspondences

chalice: a sacred witch tool used to contain water, wine, or juice; usually a goblet

chakra: a Hindu/Buddhist word meaning wheel; any of the seven centers of energy located from the base of the spine to the crown of the head, each associated with different energetic frequencies, tones, and colors

charge: to connect with an energy source such as sunlight, moonlight, or an aura

charm: to imbue an object with deeper meaning or power, usually through a ritual and by using will

circle: a ritual space that is set away from the mundane world; can act as a space to hold energy before it's directed out into the universe or into an object or person; alternately, the name of a group of witches

cleanse: any method of cleaning the energy of a place or from an object to make it neutral

cloak: an energetic dressing of the aura for any purpose, such as protection, shielding, or glamor

closed religion: a religion that is not accepting outsiders for teaching, or a religion who wishes outsiders to not practice their religion

crescent moon: when the moon is near the dark moon, it appears as a crescent

coven: name of a group of witches

dark moon: the point where the sun and moon are in direct alignment, after which the lunar cycle starts over and the new moon is born as a tiny crescent

defensive magic: neutral magic, such as binding or poppet magic

déjà vu: the feeling of having experienced the present moment before, possibly as a premonition

delta brainwaves: the slowest brainwaves that occur in deep, dreamless sleep, and sometimes meditation

deosil: clockwise, or a clockwise movement that creates a building energy

directive weather magic: modifying the weather to your preference using thought and energy

divination: any method used to tell the truth about the present or to know more about the future, such as tarot cards, runes, scrying, or a pendulum

elemental spirit: a spirit of earth, air, water, or fire; called upon when casting a circle using elemental spirits

empath: a person who feels the energy of a place and the emotions of others

energetic field: see *aura*

energetic states: the different forms of energy (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)

energy flip: a method used to convert negative energy into neutral or positive energy

energy grid: a method to check the frequency of different energetic states (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)

energy ladders: term used to describe what happens when two trusting, supportive people lift each other up repeatedly, raising energy and facilitating insights

emotional energy: energy of our emotions in all its ranges

ecstatic practice: any energetic or magical work that elevates the mind to the gamma brainwave trance state and creates the emotion of bliss

fae: a plural of faery; higher-dimensional spirits whose world coexists with ours

familiar spirit: a spirit whom you trust and who will perform any work with you

flow moment: a unit of time spent in a flow state, in seconds, minutes, hours, or days

flow state: a mental state that happens when spiritual energy is able to infiltrate into everyday life, making everything seem magical; easiest to maintain in the medium energy levels

frequency: energy level, from low to medium to high

gamma brainwaves: brainwaves that are shorter/higher frequency than beta brainwaves, often occurring in ecstatic moments

genius: see *muse spirit*

gibbous moon: the moon phase either before or after the full moon, when the moon appears to look like an egg or an eye

ghost: spirit of a deceased person who is still present on earth

glamor: magic used by a person to look more beautiful or to look like someone or something else

grounding: connecting with your body, possibly by connecting to the earth, eating food and drinking water, and relaxing, among other activities

guardian (or mental guardian): another name for the ego, which represents the nonspiritual self and acts as a gatekeeper for all kinds of interactions

guardian spirit: another word for spirit guide, a spirit from a higher dimension who assists with spiritual development and protects

home ward: a magical object to protect the home from anything that does not serve the residents' highest good

Imbolc: a sabbat between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, celebrated around February 1 to 4 in North America

initiation: a ceremony designed to recognize, dedicate, or elevate someone, sometimes with a title

invocation: an incantation or summoning of a spirit or deity

intuition: the quiet voice inside that tells you how you feel and what you want

intuitive sight: a method for choosing a tarot card or by using a soft gaze and the third eye and seeing what card wants to be chosen

intuitive touch: a method for choosing a tarot card or by feeling what card wants to be chosen

Lammas: a sabbat between the summer solstice and the autumn equinox celebrated around August 1 to 7 in North America

Litha: see *Midsummer*

lucid dream: a dream within which one wakes up and can do nearly anything

Mabon: a sabbat also known as the autumn equinox, celebrated around September 21 to 23 in North America

magic: the changes that are created when willpower is released into the world

malicious spirit: a spirit who intends harm to the living

manifestation: the drawing of something to you through willpower

meditation: a practice of being still, quieting the mind, and allowing thoughts to drift away; associated with cleansing, deep breathing, raising energy, and trance states

mental energy: energy of the mind; the ability to focus, study, direct energy and will, express yourself, communicate, create boundaries, and make decisions

Midsummer: a sabbat occurring on the summer solstice, celebrated around June 23 in North America

mundane: the regular nonmagical world; also a material mindset that believes there's nothing more than what can be experienced with the five senses

muse spirit: also known as a genius, a spirit who inspires creations and gives inspiration

nature spirit: the spirit of an ecosystem or a single part of it, including the plants, rocks, soil, and water.

new moon: the tiniest sliver of the reborn crescent moon, which starts after the dark moon and begins the new cycle of the moon

omen: a sign or portent

open religion: a religion that encourages outsiders to practice and adapt their religion, usually with no traditional lineage and no standard initiatory rites

origin story: your earliest memories of discovering magic, spirits, or the gods

otherworldly winds: spiritual energy from the underworld and the upperworld

Ostara: a sabbat occurring on the spring equinox, around March 20 to 21 in North America

pendulum: a lightweight object such as a crystal or charm attached to a short chain that is dangled in one's energy field and used for divination

personal correspondence: an item that you feel can be used to represent something else, such as a crystal, rock, mineral, herb, plant, color, season, number, etc.

personal gnosis: insights or wisdom received from personal experience with the gods

physical energy: energy found in the body and in physical interactions of the universe

poppet: a doll or humanlike object used for neutral magic, magical defense, or baneful magic

popular reality: the reality that society promotes through media and social expectations; a commonly agreed-upon reality for the majority of people that is created for commodification of goods

practice: a lighter form of magic or a simple magic without a ritual; alternately, a wholistic view of personal magical workings

premonition: an insight or vision about something that may happen in the future

rewilding: the practice of getting back in touch with your childlike spirit or feeling free and wild

rite of passage: ceremony designed to recognize someone's change in life, such as changing from a teenager to an adult, from a maiden to a mother, etc.

ritual: a higher form of magic, usually with a circle, to raise energy

runes: several alphabets of Germanic origin based on symbols carved into stones, bones, or wood tiles; used as a divination tool

sabbat: a solar celebration day when the earth is tilted to the maximum in one direction (summer and winter solstices), the exact point between the solstices (spring and autumn equinox), or the four points in between each solstice and equinox (cross-quarter days)

Samhain: a sabbat between the autumn equinox and the winter solstice, celebrated around October 31 to November 8 in North America

scry: to perform divination by using second sight, a trance state, and a reflective object

second sight: a way of looking at the world through a trance state to see things in their other states

semiclosed religion: a religion that teaches outsiders but does not encourage people to act on their own; usually has traditions and initiatory rites

shadow work: the often-painful task of facing one's own shadow, or what's hidden from our conscious minds, in order to gain clarity and truth

sigil: a piece of art created using letters, numbers, and/or symbols and used in magical practice

simple intuitive magic: a combination of intention, personal correspondences, magical act, and raising energy

spell: words used in a ritual or practice

spell jar: a jar made with intention and personal correspondences, using the magical act of combining

spirit guides: beneficial energetic beings, also known as guardian spirits

spirit speak: in tarot or runes or on witch walks, when something flies out and makes itself known

spiritual energy: the energy of your spirit and energetic field

symbology: the practice of using objects to represent an abstract idea

tarot cards: a deck of minor and major arcana with symbols and imagery used for divination

theta brainwaves: brainwaves that are slower than beta and alpha beta brainwaves but with a higher frequency than delta waves, common in deep relaxation and used in trance work

tradition: a spiritual belief system with a history of establishment and an initiation ceremony, such as Wicca

trance state: any state with a brainwave other than beta, useful for magic and meditation

underworld: a lower energy plane concurrent to ours that can be traversed via the world tree and slower brainwave trance states

upperworld: a higher energy plane concurrent to ours that can be traversed via the world tree and a higher frequency brainwave trance state

vocal intonation: speaking with power or drama to create an otherworldly sounding voice in ritual

wand: a magical tool used to summon spirits

waning moon: half of the moon cycle starting the moment after the full moon and continuing until the dark moon, about fourteen days

waxing moon: half of the moon cycle starting the moment after the new moon and continuing until the full moon, about fourteen days

weather magic: working with the weather for magical or mundane purposes

Wheel of the Year: the eight sabbats that make up the year

widdershins: counterclockwise; useful for opening a circle, banishing, or decreasing the energy of something

will: an intention and goals, not too broad or too narrow, used in manifestation and many other kinds of magic

willpower: will combined with a high frequency of spiritual energy

witch's hat: a model based on Maslow's pyramid that details the amount of time spent on energetic tasks

world tree: a legendary tree from many cultures that connects our world to an upperworld and an underworld through trance states

Yule: a sabbat on midwinter, also known as the winter solstice, occurring around December 20 to 23 in North America

Essayist Biographies

Mat Auryn is a professional psychic, witch, occult teacher, writer, and author. He holds initiations within Black Rose Witchcraft, the Cabot-Kent Hermetic Temple, the Temple of Witchcraft, and other occult traditions. He is a High Priest in the Sacred Fires Tradition of Witchcraft. He blogs at *For Puck's Sake* on Patheos Pagan and is the author of *Psychic Witch: A Metaphysical Guide to Meditation, Magick, and Manifestation* (Llewellyn).

Lisa Bland is a witch and astrologer with a holistic healing focus in her professional life, community service, and her witchcraft. Lisa writes on the blog *Living the Liminal: Modern Witchcraft Musings*. A long-time advocate for women's health and inclusive witchcraft, Lisa is an active volunteer with local, national, and international groups in political advocacy, health care, and pagan organizations.

Penny Goody has been a presenter and coordinator of many events at festivals and mystical gatherings. She has a doctor of divinity and went through a rite of passage to become a crone. She wrote a few passages in *The Heart of the Elder: Good Elders and Their Influence*. Goody worked for decades as a tarot card reader at Renaissance faires but currently teaches rhythmic ribbon dancing and encourages others to be their very best.

Shringara Hasya is a compassionate and devoted healer, mother, and grandmother. She blends modern alternative therapies with traditional shamanic techniques to create a unique and intuitive holistic healing approach that focuses on trauma release, ancestral healing, and personal empowerment. Her passion for metaphysics and the healing arts began at a young age, and she has been involved in ceremonial healing work and plant medicine meditations for many years. She launched Quintessential Alchemy Healing Arts in 2007 and currently resides in Eugene, Oregon.

Heather Renae Horton is a professional astrologer and licensed professional counselor. She has been in the astrology practice for over fifteen years, consulting individuals as well as businesses.

Michael M. Hughes is an author, speaker, magical thinker, and activist. He is the creator of the internationally viral "Mass Spell to Bind Donald Trump and All Those Who Abet Him," the largest and longest-running magical working in history. He is also the author of *Magic for the Resistance: Rituals and Spells for Change* (Llewellyn, 2018). He frequently presents workshops and speaks on politics, magic, pop culture, the paranormal, and tarot.

Stefanie Palmer is a registered aromatherapist and reiki master. Her passions guided her to create companies that assist in elevating universal consciousness, including Awaken Essential Oils, the Chakra Box, and the Blessed Be Box (co-created with Astrea Taylor).

Hannah Savage is an eclectic pagan devoted to Dionysus. She blogs as *Dance of the Maenad* for Patheos Pagan and teaches workshops at pagan gatherings. She lives in Wisconsin with her ball python, Tehiri.

Jacki Smith is the founder of Coventry Creations, an internationally known maker of spiritual products, and is the co-owner of the Candle Wick Shoppe in Ferndale, MI. In 1992, Jacki was first on the national market with her Blessed

Herbal Candles, which gave birth to the spiritual candle industry. She teaches spiritual development classes, leads podcasts, and is the best-selling author of *Coventry Magic* and the coauthor of *Do It Yourself Akashic Wisdom: Access the Library of Your Soul*. She has dedicated her life to the mission of normalizing the words *witch* and *magic*. She is also the founder of the Witches Union and the online Facebook group Witches Union: Spell Casters Club.

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Index

A

activism, 191, 192

altar, 56, 57, 68, 95, 104, 106, 108, 116, 122, 125, 144, 146, 149, 150, 155, 156, 161, 165, 166, 168, 178, 184, 185, 207, 222, 225, 226, 243, 262, 280, 291, 294, 309, 313

ancestral spirits, 160, 168, 206, 313

animal spirits, 163, 164

aromatherapy, 97, 98, 286

astral projection, 117, 227–229, 270, 313

astronomical rituals, 113

astronomy, 113

athame, 52, 53, 55, 64, 69, 207, 210, 262, 263, 313

atmosphere, 16, 27, 110, 111, 148, 178, 313

aura / energetic field, 8, 38, 46–48, 75, 84, 85, 100, 103, 196, 205, 208, 211, 213, 225, 243, 265

auric charge, 85, 88, 222

Auryn, Mat, 58, 321

B

Baba Yaga, 132, 238–240

baneful magic, 166, 197, 198, 204, 206, 208–211, 313, 318

banishing spirits, 170

bath magic, 92
bell, 53
beneficial spirits, 67, 68, 175
binding, 192, 206, 314
Bland, Lisa, 240, 321
blessing food and beverages, 84
book of shadows, 21, 54, 70, 71, 76, 77, 86, 87, 101, 102, 104, 112, 115, 117, 141, 145, 161, 209, 215, 216, 229, 243, 250, 251, 258, 259, 261, 262, 267, 270, 274, 309, 314
breath work, 81, 82, 88, 110, 222, 229
broom, 54, 273–276, 279, 287, 314
broom closet, 273–276, 279, 287, 314

C

candle magic, 93, 199, 221
candles, 55–57, 65, 69, 86, 88, 93, 122, 145, 226, 244, 263, 277, 281, 287, 323
cauldron, 54, 55, 62, 90, 91, 145, 209, 238, 239, 289–291, 311, 314
chakras, 44–48, 55, 76, 84, 101, 106, 110, 161, 208, 214, 217, 220, 224, 225, 231, 243, 249, 250, 256, 257, 268, 269, 313, 314, 322
chalice, 55, 144, 146, 314
changing your mind, 19–20
charging objects, 94
charms, 54, 91, 95, 96, 98, 165, 168, 182, 222, 232, 243, 284, 314, 317
circle casting, 67
cleansing, 15, 46, 59–66, 77, 84, 110, 112, 118, 171, 173, 179, 207, 241, 317
combining magics, 221–222
community, 13, 33, 96, 180, 187, 263, 274, 275, 278, 285–291, 296, 300, 303, 305, 321
consecrating, 64
contradictions, 21
cord-cutting ritual, 205–206

correspondences, 55, 85–88, 90–93, 98, 103, 145, 192, 199, 204, 285, 295, 314, 319
cosmic downloads, 270
cultural respect, 137–142, 250
curses, 4, 118, 166, 195, 197, 198, 204, 208–211, 287

D
death, 127, 160, 238, 240, 283, 300
déjà vu, 266–268, 314
divination, 4, 54, 58, 66, 109, 132, 162, 170, 192, 222, 241, 243, 244, 262, 266, 283, 285, 287, 315, 317–319
dreams, 13, 17, 19, 34, 35, 54, 59, 83, 85, 88, 106, 109, 116, 117, 123, 153, 162, 164, 180, 202, 214, 220, 235–240, 244, 246, 253, 266–268, 271, 275, 300, 308, 316
drills, 216, 219

E
ecstatic practices, 229
elementals, 169, 249
emotional energy, 30, 32, 33, 39–41, 45, 154, 181, 183, 255, 315
empathic moments, 251, 252
enchanting objects, 95
energy call back, 76, 207–208
energy flips, 263, 271
energy frequencies, 30, 40, 177, 181, 217, 220, 251, 276
energy from the natural world, 82, 85
energy grid, 43, 44, 85, 216, 217, 315
energy ladders, 191, 199, 200, 231, 315
environment, 8, 41, 159, 180, 187–189, 218, 219, 232, 241, 245, 251, 273, 274
essential oils, 55, 65, 83, 85, 87, 88, 92, 93, 97, 98, 107, 108, 202, 262, 322

F

fae, 53, 56, 123, 124, 165–169, 249, 250, 315
familiars, 163
fire walk, 35, 38, 177
flexible coven, 275, 281
flow moment/state, 3, 75, 82, 91, 110, 184, 200, 211, 214, 218, 221, 222, 251, 252, 255–259, 263–265, 268, 269, 271, 276, 279, 282, 284, 289, 293, 295–298, 305, 315

G

ghosts, 132, 159, 160, 168, 169, 171, 240, 249, 316
glamor, 100, 101, 180, 195, 232, 314, 316
gods, 29, 55, 56, 58, 70, 76, 77, 93, 101, 105, 107, 132, 135–158, 167, 168, 200, 209–211, 214, 220, 224, 238, 243, 259, 261, 265, 266, 274, 294, 297, 300, 302, 309, 317, 318
Goody, Penny, 302, 321
grounding, 37, 65, 98, 113, 170, 207, 211, 220, 224, 241, 252, 256, 257, 295, 316

H

Hasya, Shringara, 202–203, 322
healing, 37, 42, 43, 49, 59, 92, 97, 102, 118, 122, 162, 187, 190, 196, 201–204, 238, 244, 245, 247, 249, 268, 275, 287, 308, 310, 321, 322
Hel, 146, 155
hermit time, 298, 302
hexes, 88, 163, 166, 188, 195, 204, 206, 208–211
higher energies, 85, 209, 213, 229, 232, 256
higher self, 56, 76, 77, 84, 88, 103, 104, 111, 161, 180, 201, 231, 233, 310
hobbies, 184, 185, 199
home, 16, 17, 31, 56, 57, 63, 65, 86, 90–92, 98, 105, 108, 118, 121, 124, 126, 148, 153, 160, 161, 166, 168, 171, 172, 174, 175, 178, 179, 193, 195, 222, 230, 231, 239, 240, 259, 262, 263, 285, 289, 290, 316

home cleansing, 179–180
Horton, Heather, 125, 322
Hughes, Michael M., 191, 193, 308, 322

I
imagination, 58, 59, 172, 214, 277
imposter syndrome, 22, 23
intuition, 2–5, 7–10, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21–28, 30, 33, 34, 43, 45, 52, 57, 60, 63, 65, 73, 76, 79, 82, 85, 88, 90, 91, 93, 94, 96–98, 101, 103, 105–107, 109, 119, 125, 128, 129, 131, 132, 137, 161, 166, 175, 178, 181, 182, 184, 191, 192, 198, 199, 204, 208, 210, 213, 214, 222, 232, 236, 242–245, 247, 250, 251, 261–263, 270, 276–278, 283–285, 294–301, 303, 306, 316
intuitive choices, 19, 26
intuitive morning practice, 106, 298
intuitive night practice, 108
intuitive practices, 2, 105, 108, 109, 111, 257, 283
intuitive rituals, 129, 222

L
leader, becoming a, 278–279
leading a group ritual, 279–284
legacy, 140, 277, 300
living in the flow, 3, 214, 256, 268, 269, 271
long rituals and spells, 226

M
magical cloaks, 83, 99–101, 199, 217, 264, 314
magical defense, 197, 318
magical objects, 52, 59, 60, 227
malicious spirits, 166, 167, 209, 210
manifestation, 53, 70–72, 127, 132, 162, 198, 238, 256, 295, 317, 320, 321

meditation, 12, 38, 82, 107, 109–111, 116, 161, 184, 190, 193, 201, 202, 205, 214, 215, 222, 227, 228, 249, 283, 284, 313, 315, 317, 319, 321
mental energy, 30, 36, 38–41, 58, 178, 213–216, 228, 255, 317
mentor, 278, 288
mirror magic, 199, 230–232
moon phases, 54, 90, 94, 116–118, 293, 316
moon/lunar magic, 114, 120
mundane world, 1, 27, 53, 69, 70, 132, 177, 178, 180, 181, 193, 211, 255, 259, 314
muse spirits/geniuses, 80, 82, 162, 163, 185, 310, 316, 317

N
nature spirits, 53, 124, 164–168, 188, 249, 291
negative self-talk, 209

O
offerings, 54, 55, 124, 137, 140, 141, 144–146, 149, 157, 163–166, 168, 185, 188, 189, 226, 262, 300, 309
origin story, 15, 16, 317
otherworlds, 4, 66, 235, 248–250, 252

P
pagan and witch gatherings, 286
pagan rights, 189–190
Palmer, Stefanie, 97–98, 322
Papa Legba, 141
pendulum, 58, 192, 243, 262, 315, 317
personal gnosis, 138, 152–154, 200, 318
physical energy, 30–33, 39–41, 44, 71, 255, 318
poppet magic, 204, 314
premonitions, 240, 266–268
problems with spirits, 171

protection, 37, 66, 86, 91, 98–100, 105, 107, 144, 162, 163, 166–169, 171, 174–176, 179, 186, 192, 203, 204, 210, 212, 222, 228, 308, 314
psychic moments, 9

R
radical self-acceptance, 21, 231
raising energy, 3, 48, 75–77, 79, 80, 85, 87, 88, 285, 315, 317, 319
raising the otherworldly winds, 220
reading the body, 18–19
recharging magic, 225
reclaiming yourself, 10
releasing the bonds of the past, 14
rewilding, 7, 14, 15, 318
rite of passage, 301, 318, 321
runes, 57, 242, 243, 262, 315, 318, 319

S
Savage, Hannah, 148, 322
scrying, 55, 58, 117, 244, 266, 315
second sight, 152, 235, 240, 241, 248, 266, 270, 271, 318
self-initiation, 103
self-love, 33, 45, 199, 231, 286
sex/sensuality, 8, 12, 31, 45, 82, 88, 147, 200, 223, 224, 229, 237, 238
shadow work, 115, 235, 244, 247, 248, 319
sigils, 93, 96–98, 103, 104, 108, 179, 189, 222, 225, 297, 311, 319
signs, 19, 20, 24, 33, 85, 88, 101, 125, 127, 151, 240, 244, 256, 257, 259–261, 271, 285
simple intuitive magic, 87, 88, 90, 199, 319
Smith, Jacki, 277, 322
solar rituals, 119
spell jar, 90–92, 98, 103, 112, 188, 199, 203, 222, 225, 226, 284, 319
spirit guide/guardian spirits, 76, 157, 162, 163, 168, 169, 175, 206, 228, 238, 294, 316

spirits, 22, 29, 40, 53, 54, 56, 58, 64, 67–70, 76, 77, 88, 91, 93, 101, 103, 105, 107, 111, 124, 128, 131, 136, 137, 147, 149, 157, 159–176, 179, 188, 200, 202, 207, 209–211, 227–229, 236, 238, 241, 243, 248–250, 259, 261, 262, 265, 270, 274, 291, 294, 296–298, 300, 302, 308, 313, 315, 317, 319
spiritual energy, 29, 30, 36–41, 45, 47, 48, 53, 56, 69, 71, 73, 84, 85, 106, 114, 128, 161, 200, 205, 213–215, 219, 220, 228, 250, 251, 255, 256, 259, 264, 282, 285, 290, 315, 317, 319, 320
spontaneous rituals, 127, 128
statues and images, 56, 144
stimuli, 37, 88, 224
sweeten spells, 203
symbology, 147, 319

T

tarot, 54, 57, 62, 64, 101, 105, 106, 109, 116, 117, 192, 225, 242, 243, 262, 284, 285, 287, 298, 315, 316, 319, 321, 322
Thor, 155
time witchery, 265, 266, 268, 269, 271
toxic source removal, 12–14
trance states , 81, 83, 97, 196, 202, 213–216, 225, 228–230, 232, 241, 246, 249–251, 266, 268, 270, 271, 281, 313, 315, 317–320
transmuting problems, 183
triggers, 25, 27

U

unbrainwashing, 10–12
underworld, 221, 224, 249–251, 317, 319, 320
upperworld, 221, 249–251, 317, 319, 320

V

veil, 125, 131, 132
virtue, 154, 197, 310
visions, 132, 152, 202, 232, 240, 266–269, 278

void, 58, 115, 132, 235, 236, 241, 246, 252
Voudou, 285

W
wand, 56, 63, 66, 262, 290, 319
weather magic, 185–186
wilderness, 4, 12, 14, 15, 17, 132
will, 2, 3, 7, 9, 15, 17–19, 22, 24, 28, 29, 33, 35, 36, 38–40, 42–45, 47, 48, 52, 54, 56–59, 61–66, 69, 70, 72–84, 87, 88, 90–96, 98, 99, 101, 102, 106–108, 111, 112, 114–117, 119, 126, 133, 135, 142–144, 149–151, 155, 157–159, 162–170, 172, 173, 177–182, 184, 185, 187–189, 192, 196, 198–203, 205, 206, 208, 211, 215, 216, 218, 219, 221, 228, 231, 232, 235, 238, 241–247, 250–252, 257, 259, 263, 266, 269, 275, 277, 279–281, 285, 288–291, 293–300, 303, 305, 306, 314, 315, 317, 320
wishcraft, 52
witch bag, 262, 263
witch tools, 52, 56, 58, 61, 79
witch walks, 227, 262, 319
witch's hat, 30, 31, 38–40, 44, 255, 320
world tree, 249, 319, 320

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